

POEMS

By

JOHN FRANCIS O'DONNELL





953

0255

1891-



CONTENTS.



GENERAL POEMS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	vii
<hr/>	
In the Twilight,	1
The Inn,	4
Last Moments,	7
The Lilies,	10
Geraldine's Garden,	12
April,	15
Drifting,	17
Amy's Swallow,	19
The Old Violin,	21
The Bird's Nest,	23
Marguerite,	25
My Jack,	27
The Swallow,	30
Where ?	33
Goethe's House,	35

M585439

	PAGE
Waiting,	39
A Voice,	41
Three Times,	42
The Fuchsia,	48
The Old House by the Mere,	50
A July Dawn,	54
Guesses,	56
To Spring,	58
Happy Christmases,	60
By the Turnstile,	69
The Dead Rose,	71
At the Inn,	74
May,	76
Under the Chestnuts,	78
God help Her !	80
Alice's Keepsake,	86
The Manse,	88
The Picture,	90

POEMS RELATING TO IRELAND.

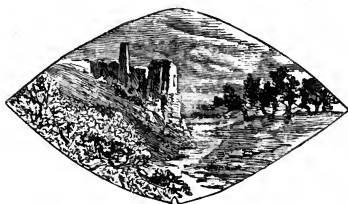
A Vision,	95
The Mountain Pass,	97
The Four Masters,	101
Ossian,	104
The Wicklow Septs,	108
Home Sick,	115
The Return,	117
St Malachy,	119

CONTENTS.

v

	PAGE
Exiles,	122
Adare,	125
True to Death,	129
In the Night Time,	132
In Exile,	137
Goldsmith's Grave,	140
A Canadian Festival,	145
Luggelaw,	156
The Question,	159
Dead,	163
Edward Martin,	166
To — in Penal Servitude,	169
St Isidore Manuscripts,	172
The Flight of the Celt,	178
A Spinning Song,	182
Limerick Town,	184
A Traitor,	189
The Dancing Master,	192
On the Ramparts,	194
The Founding of the Monastery of Donegal,	198
An Interview,	201
John Mitchel,	204
An Australian Message,	209
Reminiscences of a Day,	212
The Four-Leaved Shamrock,	216
Our Faith—Our Fatherland,	219
Tombs in the Church of Montorio,	222
The Green Gift,	225
Christmas Dreams in Canada,	228

	PAGE
An Irish Deathbed in Canada,	232
Back to the Green Shore,	235
The Treaty Stone,	238
Ireland,	242
My Fiddle,	246
Not Dead,	249
Resurrection !	252



P O E M S.

BY

JOHN FRANCIS O'DONNELL.

“ Had he but lived, he might have left a book
Worthy to be his monument.”

The Music Lesson.—J. F. O'DONNELL.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD DOWLING.

LONDON:
WARD & DOWNEY,
12 YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1891.

EDINBURGH :
COLSTON AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS.



INTRODUCTION.



IN 1888 Mr Michael MacDonagh began a course of articles in the Dublin *Evening Telegraph* on "Irish Graves in England." Mr John T. Kelly, Secretary of the Southwark Irish Literary Club, wrote Mr MacDonagh expressing a hope that John Francis O'Donnell's grave would not be forgotten. Mr MacDonagh replied that it was the sight of O'Donnell's neglected grave which suggested the series to him. Thereupon Mr Kelly conceived the idea of putting the grave in seemly order. He called a meeting of the Southwark Irish Literary Club for the purpose of raising a memorial to "Caviare." Mr John Augustus O'Shea drew up an impassioned appeal for aid. The appeal was printed and circulated, and letters of sympathy and promises of help came in from many admirers. The grave was put in a more decent condition, and then arose the question of raising a memorial to the poet.

Out of those gentlemen who had responded to the call the following were formed into a com-

mittee: Mr John Barry, M.P.; Mr Daniel Crilly, M.P.; Mr F. A. Fahy, Mr John Finucane, M.P.; Mr E. Fitzpatrick, A.H.R.A.; Mr John T. Kelly, Mr Michael MacDonagh, The Rev. C. P. Meehan, M.R.I.A.; The Very Rev. Canon O'Hanlon, M.R.I.A.; Mr F. A. O'Keeffe, Mayor of Limerick; Mr J. G. O'Keeffe, Mr John Augustus O'Shea, Mr J. M. Reynolds, The Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J.; Mr T. D. Sullivan, M.P., and the writer. Mr O'Shea was chosen Chairman, Mr Kelly, Secretary, and Mr MacDonagh, Treasurer.

On Mr Kelly fell the weight of the undertaking. He not only acted as Secretary to the Committee, but also as literary executor to the poet. He got together, with much patience and pains, the poems which form the present collection. In the latter department of his labour he received most material assistance from Father Russell, Mr T. D. Sullivan, Mr MacDonagh, Mr Crilly, and Mr J. G. O'Keeffe. Mr John H. O'Donnell, son of the poet, placed at Mr Kelly's disposal a collection of his father's verses cut from magazines and newspapers.

For months Mr Kelly devoted the scanty leisure of his days to the object he had at heart. He ransacked the British Museum, transcribed hundreds of poems, and entered into correspondence with people who could give him copies of verses, or supply information on the subject of his research. A notion may be formed of the labour expended from the fact that he has had to exclude for want of room, a greater mass of MS. than would make three volumes as bulky as this one.

As soon as all the trouble was over, and the pleasant part appeared in sight, Mr Kelly placed his notes, memoranda, and proofs of the book all completed, in my hands, asking me to write a few pages of introductory matter. I demurred, on the grounds that other members of the Committee were infinitely better qualified for the work, and possessed higher claims upon the privilege; that I had not made O'Donnell's acquaintance until a few years before his death; and that I had no new sources of information to draw on beyond a bundle of O'Donnell's letters. Mr Kelly still urged me, and I, being only too willing, in the end consented.

“What you say about my ‘book’ is cheering, but I don’t like you to live for a moment under a wrong impression. Towards the production of the volume I would not be able to contribute a stiver, and that is why I begged you to tender it to X. as a speculation. Of course, if ever the book gets into type, I would exclude all polemical and political matter. And I would be miserable if anyone else, out of good nature, or from a fervid faith in my bit of popularity, risked a farthing on my account. If it be not taken up as a venture, let us say no more about it. X. suggested some time ago that I should publish a volume by subscription. And St. Mary’s Workhouse within half-a-mile of me!”

This occurs in a letter of O'Donnell's, written, from London to Dublin, on “Sunday night, December 1872.” He never got out a volume by sub-

scription, he never went to St. Mary's Workhouse, but less than a year and a half after this letter was written, he was carried to St. Mary's Cemetery, Kensal Green, and laid at rest for ever.

In February 1873 he wrote me again: "About my 'poems,' put the thing out of your head until the proverbial 'time' of the dramatists 'shall come.'"

The "time" of the dramatists has come at long last. The sowing of the poet has been reaped, but the poet himself is not here to rejoice with us at the ingathering.

John Francis O'Donnell was born in the city of Limerick in the year 1837. Some say Nicholas Street in the old town, others Upper William Street in the new town, is where he first saw the light. I know nothing of his father or mother, except that in a letter written shortly before his death he spoke of his mother as being then alive. He always retained a warm corner in his heart for his native city. Several of his poems bear testimony to his love of it. He writes to a Clonmel man in January 1872: "You call Limerick the city of dulness. So it is. But give it to me a million times before the capital of Tipperary."

Where he went to school I cannot tell. In his "copy" he made free use of Latin and French, and I have heard him speak as though he was familiar with German. In a letter he says, "That — who drilled you in Mathematics (I always spell that glorious science with a big M) is the friend whom I asked after." I should like to think his education had not been hindered by much ordinary schooling.

Anyway, he mounted the public rostrum himself at fourteen by contributing verses in 1851 to the *Kilkenny Journal*.

When only seventeen years of age he reached the goal of poetic National aspirants: in 1854 he had verses in the *Nation*. A youth with O'Donnell's intensely patriotic nature must have been fired with feelings of intolerable joy on finding himself in that intellectual Mecca of the faithful. His swift, fiery, young, spiritual sight, glancing backward and forward through the years, must have seen the abstract glories of his desires there and then taking concrete shape. Ever since its foundation, the *Nation* had been the Parnassus of Irish National poetry—of Irish poetry absolutely; for, observe, there is no such thing as Irish poetry which is not National. The Irish people, in the mass, are the most poetic people of all the world in our era; yet despite the enormous diffusion of the faculty divine among them, Ireland has not been able to produce one single bard who could sing one single verse to the Castle Harp.

"Let me make the ballads, and let who will make the laws." The "very wise man" who said this did not pierce to the soul of his own saying. The ballads of a nation are the history of the soul of the people from hour to hour. They express the laws which the people have made for themselves when unable to reach such a clumsy contrivance as the Statute book. They are the laws which inhere in the hearts of the

people, and in so far as the Statute law is not a diapason of a country's songs, justice is slandered.

Davis, Mangan, Mitchel, Duffy, Florence M'Carthy, Dalton Williams, "Speranza," M'Gee, shone in the seeing eyes of young O'Donnell as radiant gods when he took his place in the ranks of the *Nation*. If the supreme gift of genius cannot be allowed to any of the *Nation* writers, they all spoke in the sweet, fine tones acquired only by those who have the freedom of the penetralia and speech with the oracle itself. All the *Nation* writers came of the priestly sept of genius, though they may not have been prophets of their tribe. They had, as might be needed, the spirit of battle or the courage of martyrdom in their veins. They would carry into the conflict no weapons but the weapons of cavaliers. In the long wars some fell, and some, cooling in ardour, retired into peace; but no man of that *Nation* band took out of the fight one feather less than the panoply of honour.

Into the flaminian order of his race had this unknown Limerick lad been admitted. He, John Francis O'Donnell, seventeen years old, summoned to raise his voice in the choir where the cadences of Davis and Mitchel, and Mangan and Duffy and M'Gee, were echoing still, sounding even now! He allowed to sing among what was left of that band by death, and by the felonious law of felony! To make offerings at the shrine of The Dark Rosaleen while the altar still smoked of the sacrifice! This was the

purification of his lips by the sacred fire! This was

“The consecration, and the poet’s dream.”

Now the young poet made up his mind to adopt writing in some form as a career. He accordingly acquired a knowledge of shorthand, and for about two years acted as reporter on the *Munster News*, published in his native city. In after life he never forgot the phonographic art. He was the first man I ever knew well who wrote shorthand fluently, and the first man I ever knew well who could write verse on the spur of the moment. I shall never forget the astonishment with which I saw him exercise the two arts conjointly. He and I were chatting, between night and morning, about a poem which he had conceived the idea of while we talked. He said, “Wait a minute,” pulled a letter out of his pocket, and began writing with great rapidity on the back of it. “How is this?” he asked, after a few minutes, during which his hand had not ceased to move over the paper. He read the poem out. I said what I thought, and asked to see the MS. “It won’t be of much use to you,” said he, with a laugh, as he threw the paper across the table. The sheet was covered with characters that looked to me like Arabic dancing mad, which he assured me was fairly good phonography, for a man out of practice. “And can you always write verse as quickly as that?” I asked. “Well,” he said, “I can make the verses as quickly as that, but they have to be copied or

written out in longhand. When I am very particular, I jot down the poem nearly as fast as you saw me just now, throw the paper into a drawer, never think of it for a couple of weeks, then take it out and finish." "Why," said I, "you write verse as fast as prose!" "Faster," said he; "as a matter of speed, I could turn out a column of verse sooner than a column of prose."

But the experience of O'Donnell's method of work which amazed me most of all I had in the *Nation* office. I went out into the composing room and found him seated on the only chair, smoking and writing, with his paper on the "stone," a large high table of slate or metal where the pages of newspapers and books are imposed or arranged in the proper order for printing. A very large and extremely noisy machine was in full work below, in sight of the composing room, there being a wide, long opening in the floor to let light down to the nethermost regions. "What on earth are you doing here?" I shouted above the din. "I—I—I—," he answered, he had a slight impediment in his speech, "I am doing my poem for this week." "What! in this awful racket?" I shouted incredulously. "Yes," he said; "I like the noise. It soothes me," and he went on with the poem.

After spending a couple of years as reporter on the *Munster News*, O'Donnell went to Clonmel in connection with the *Tipperary Examiner*. Here he found a wife. Mrs O'Donnell was a Miss Jones of that town, a lady of intellectual attainments

and great musical ability, who survives him and lives abroad. Concerning his domestic life I know absolutely nothing; and if I were intimately acquainted with it, I should not consider myself at liberty to speak of it here. Unless a literary man's domestic life has exercised a direct and striking influence on his career, or work, or thought, or fate, I cannot see why it should be obtruded upon the public any more than the domestic life of a doctor or lawyer. I always understood from O'Donnell that his home was a most happy one, and that it had exercised no commanding influence on him as an author. Indeed, his whole life was singularly uneventful, and in all I have learned of it there is nothing exciting or abnormally interesting. He was never rich, or anything like rich. I do not think, taking an average, that his income exceeded that of an ordinary Civil Service clerk of his standing in years. He did not ever endure the absolute hunger considered proper to the condition of a poet, and I should be surprised to hear he ever had a sum of money for which he could not easily find a channel of usefulness outside a deposit account.

In 1861 O'Donnell had found his way to London, and was the assistant of his old editor of the *Tipperary Examiner*, Mr A. W. Harnet, then editing the *Universal News*, an organ of Catholic opinion. In 1862 he was promoted to the editorial chair.

The year 1861 was one of the most brilliant in his life. Then his first poem, "Guesses," was

accepted by Charles Dickens, and published in *All the Year Round*. The famous novelist wrote the young poet a most cordial and encouraging letter, and either in that letter, or during an interview, recommended O'Donnell to adopt literature as a profession. In the course of a meeting, the author of *A Christmas Carol* gave the young poet excellent advice, and spoke in warm and appreciative terms of the ability of Irishmen in journalism and literature. He said O'Donnell's countrymen were clever, picturesque, intelligent, full of resources, but lacked staying power. I am not sure "staying power" was the phrase Dickens used, but it expresses the impression. Dickens had been no more than a couple of years dead when O'Donnell gave me the history of that meeting. I listened like one in a dream. It did not seem possible I could be sitting in the same room with a man who had held private conversation, carried on in ordinary everyday English words, with the man who told of the murder in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and created Quilp. Of course, I did not believe Dickens would speak in a foreign tongue, but I did think he would talk lightning. Dickens was an idol of my youth. To-day I know excellent men who walk about London, or drive in cabs and omnibuses, and eat simple food, and tell me they knew Dickens. If I were put on my oath, I should say I do not doubt these men. But in careless offhand moments, I should as soon think of believing them if they told me they had eaten fruit in the gardens of the Hesperides.

"Guesses" was only the first of many poems which Dickens took from O'Donnell in 1861 and 1862. In the former year he wrote a good deal of prose and verse for the *Dublin Illustrated Journal*. In the latter he went to Dublin to fill a vacancy in the staff of the *Nation*, and afterwards in the same year he was appointed editor of *Duffy's Hibernian Magazine*, for which he continued to be a contributor until it ceased to exist. In 1863-4 he was back again in London. He acted as London correspondent of the *Irishman*, and subsequently he contributed to the *Shamrock*. During the Fenian excitement he represented in London the *Irish People*, the mouthpiece of the Fenians, although he was never a member of the brotherhood. In 1864 he resumed the editorship of the *Universal News*. This he kept for about a year, when he accepted the sub-editorship of the *Tablet*, retaining it for three years, until 1868, a prodigiously long time for O'Donnell to care about any routine employment, for he was as fond of change as a schoolboy. He took life gaily, and was absolutely incapable of fretting. When, less than a year before his death, he suffered from a fit of epilepsy, he wrote me in the most cheerful way, and declared that nothing could ever long depress him.

In 1870, *Zozimus*, a comic illustrated paper, was started by Mr A. M. Sullivan in Dublin, with Mr John F. O'Hea as cartoonist; O'Donnell, from first to last of it, was one of its principal, if not its chief contributor. It was while I was editing *Zozimus* that I became acquainted with him. In

the course of two long visits he paid to Dublin between 1871 and his death, the acquaintance ripened into friendship. For *Zozimus* he did all kinds of work, and each admirably—one-line jokes, paragraphs, verse, grave and gay, and a serial story. The fertility and facility of the man were most astonishing. His amazing readiness barred the production of results more enduring than the hack work of a journalist. Anything within his powers of doing he could begin on the instant. His very readiness must often—to make a bull—have stopped his way, and there can be no doubt it got him into straits he never would have entered had he been more deliberate. In a letter of his, published in the *Irish Monthly*, he says, "I seldom refuse a quarrel." He kept the circle of his friends narrow by his hatred of anything like a suspicion of patronage. The generosity of his disposition made it more easy for him to do a dozen favours than accept one. He was completely destitute of method, and he could not drudge. A vast quantity of his best work was thrown off in journalism from week to week, and with the close of the week most of the interest in it passed away for ever. He had to toil hard and incessantly to make ends meet, and he told me in 1872 that for thirteen years he had never taken a holiday but one of a week, when peremptorily ordered rest by his doctor.

Memories of the Irish Franciscans, a volume of verse written at the suggestion of Father Meehan, and published in 1871, and the *Emerald Wreath*, a collection of his prose and verse, published

by Duffy as a Christmas annual in 1865, were, I believe, his only substantive contributions to literature.

After the excitement caused by the notorious Galway election petition, O'Donnell ran a serial story, called "Sadleir the Banker; or, the Laceys of Rathcore," through the *Nation*. The last poem he sent to that paper was "The Treaty Stone," included in the present volume. Here, also, is to be found the poem which he had by him when he died; it is called, with pathetic significance, "My Fiddle," and is a farewell to his lyre. In 1872 he published a serial tale in the *Lamp*, and in the same year he became London correspondent of the *Boston Pilot*. Some of his best poems appeared in *Chambers' Journal*, 1872-3-4. For some time he contributed to the *Dublin Review*, and wrote for *Fun*, under Tom Hood. His two best known *noms de guerre* were "Caviare" and "Monkton West."

A letter of his, written in London, dated Thursday, and having the postmark of 19th July 1872, says: "Talking of work—since Sunday, 2 cols. notes, 2 cols. London gossip, and a leader 1 col., and a col. of verse for the *Nation*. For *Catholic Opinion*, two pages of notes and a leader. For *Illustrated Magazine*, 3 poems and a five col. story."

Out of the turmoil and grinding cares of a journalist's life he at last emerged, weary and exhausted, but with hope of producing something worthy of his powers now that mere bread was assured to

him. Through the influence of Lord O'Hagan he obtained an appointment in the office of the Agent General for New Zealand, with a salary of between two and three hundred a year. Writing on 15th September 1873, he says: "I got my appointment on Saturday. I don't know myself. My wife doesn't know me. The children shriek as if I were a stranger. They fancy that a miracle has been performed in the house; but, owing to their inherent obscurity, they can't pick out the saint. I have a project in my head for canonising tailors."

If, upon obtaining an official position, he conferred with tailors and turned dandy, it is not surprising that his own people could not recognise him, for he had been particularly careless in dress. In stature he was under the middle height, and of full, active figure. His eyes were dark and near-sighted. He carried his head well back, and wore moustaches and a full brown beard.

He did not long enjoy his appointment. In September 1873 he considered his worldly troubles at an end; in the Spring of next year his career was over. He died on the 7th of May 1874, aged thirty-seven years.

I have purposely refrained from saying anything respecting the merits of O'Donnell as a poet. The following collection has been made so that those who know and admire his poems may have a representative collection in a convenient form, and that those who have not yet read him may be able to form an opinion of his powers. The last rest-

ing place of O'Donnell's remains, in Kensal Green Cemetery, is marked with a simple stone; by no courtesy can that stone be taken as a monument to the poet: *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*

RICHARD DOWLING.

LONDON, 1890.



JOHN FRANCIS O'DONNELL'S POEMS.

Price 3/6. Published at 6/=-.

THE Committee formed a few years ago to publish a selection from John Francis O'Donnell's poems, and to raise a fitting memorial to the poet in Kensal Green Cemetery, where he is buried, decided to issue the volume first, and to devote all the proceeds of its sale to the erection of a monument over the grave. Subscriptions were invited, and a sufficient amount was obtained to enable the Committee to publish the poems. All the unsold copies, now numbering only thirty, are in the hands of the Committee, and they earnestly solicit subscriptions to the volume or donations to the fund, in order that their most meritorious object may be carried out. The volume of poems is splendidly bound in cloth, with bevelled edges, gilt-edged leaves, and the paper and type are of the finest. It is illustrated by many head and tail pieces, and altogether is a sumptuous volume, worthy, both intrinsically and extrinsically, of a place in the library of every lover of Irish poetry. It contains a lengthy biographical introduction by Mr. Richard Dowling, the

The selection shows O'Donnell to have had unusually ready command of exactly the right and most picturesque words, and of all the resources of metre. He possessed moreover, both force and grace. The memorial to him made by this volume was well thought of, and can only do him honour.—*THE ATHENÆUM*, 27th June, '91.

Irish Nationalism has produced some spirited verse, and O'Donnell was not the least gifted of the bards which it has inspired.—*THE SPECTATOR*, 26th Sept., '91.

Occasionally the poet shows quite a Swinburnian fluency.—*GRAPHIC*, Jan., '91.

Here is poetry . . . which welled up from the very bottom of the heart of a true poet, and flows in a stream as limped, pure and musical as it is strong.—*TRUTH*, 8th Jan., '91.

The volume of poems will be forwarded post free for 4/-. Application for copies to be made to Mr. MICHAEL MACDONAGH, Irish Literary Society, Bloomsbury Mansion, Hart Street, London, W.C.; or to Mr. W. O'LEARY CURTIS, National Literary Society, 4, College Green, Dublin. Donations for the memorial are also requested, (donors to receive copies of the volume) and will be gratefully received by any member of the Committee.

Committee:—

W. O'LEARY CURTIS,
RICHARD DOWLING,
FRANCIS A. FAHY,
E. FITZPATRICK, A.R.H.A.,
ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES, M.A.,
JOHN T. KELLY,

D. J. O'DONOGHUE,
Very Rev. Canon O'HANLON, M.R.I.A.,
JAMES G. O'KEEFFE,
JOHN AUGUSTUS O'SHEA,
J. M. REYNOLDS,
W. P. RYAN.

Dr. MARK RYAN, 15a, Gower Street, London, W.C.
Treasurer,

MICHAEL MACDONAGH,

Hon. Secretary.

London, April, 1894.





POEMS.

IN THE TWILIGHT.



YROW in my boat in the twilight, half-purple,
half-grey, overhead;

(Oh, cool is the splash of the water; and green is
the weed on the oar);

Before me the river runs burning, as if the white lilies
had bled,

And the track of the keel runs in lightnings that beat
on the base of the shore,

Whilst the woods by the banks in the sunset, are
flaming with fire to the core.

It darkens! the trees lock above me, they sway from
their roots and embrace:

O God, what a peace in this silence! what rest in this
sycamore gloom!

Looking down on the hurrying river, it gives back no
face to my face:

Yet 'tis Earth, for, high up in the branches, there
shivers a bird's startled plume—

'Tis Earth, though the air and the water be black with
the blackness of Doom !

Who sits in my boat, her long fingers clasped quick
round the tiller at rest ?

What! again from the land of the phantoms, oh,
tender, impalpable shade!

Thy large eyes look out on my sorrow, thy large eyes,
my Paradise guest;

My temples throb high, but the Angel saith : Be of
good heart, not afraid ;

(The asphodels tangled and bright in her brown hair's
voluminous braid).

Ah, Winifred, oft through this darkness in old imme-
morial years,

We loved, as we floated together, the space of the
sweet afternoon;

Time kept no account of the laughter that followed our
fugitive tears;

Our hearts were the missel-thrush piping his heart in
the joyance of June,

From the faint orange gleam of the morn till the south
wind delivered the moon.

Help, Lord ! I disowned, I betrayed you. Ay, changed
to another from you ;

O Winifred, Winifred, pity ! O broken heart, plead
from the dust !

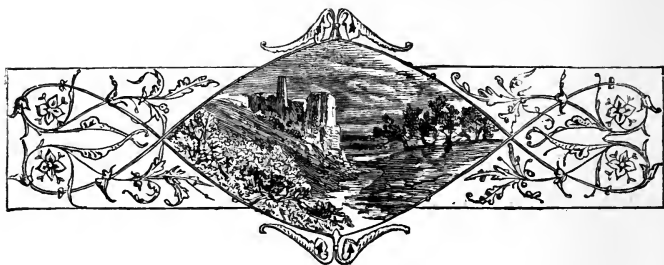
That you would have poured out your blood at my feet
to redeem me, I knew,

But I smote you, dead darling, I smote you—dashed
down to the earth all your trust ;
And God drew His angel unto Him, and let the man
live with his lust.

But ever, in solemnest midnights, I kneel, with my
face to your grave,
And I call you, I call you, I call you, till round me
the tombstones grow white—
Till the grasses and weeds by your bed in the rainy wind
dismally wave ;
And I pray to be sleeping beside you—forgotten and
thrust out of sight,
From the vision of man, from myself, in the hell of
no dawn-bearing night.

Stay, Winifred! Ah, the strong river, it bears me, it
bears me afar!
(Oh, fierce is the scowl of the water, and black is the
weed on the oar !)
The darkness is passed, for above me the sky holds one
terrible star:
She is gone, and the keel's track is sparkling and
hissing in light on the shore,
And the clouds in the stillness and glory, are flaming
with fire to the core.





THE INN.

THE queer, old-fashioned Inn stood on the heath,
Nine bowshots from the peak-roofed country
town;
Steeds halted at its doors to gather breath,
Before the sheer rush for the Southron down.
In front, reposed the long-neglected pond—
Fissured with mosses—green with stagnant weed—
Around, were old-world flotsam, and beyond,
One loop of river, crystal as a bead.
It was deep summer, and the simmering heat
On stile, and stone, and tree, and hostler beat,
But the night gathered, and the air grew sweet :

Sweet, and of summer music redolent ;
There piped the blackbird on the bush behind
The parlour lattice, with throat sideways bent,
Whilst imaging his shadow on the blind :
A red-cheeked damsel sang unto her kine
A fireside song, in the extremest tone

Of sadness: then the distant clock struck nine:

A lusty horn, at intervals, was blown.

"From London!" went the cry, "The Mail! the Mail!"

And in it dashed—four beasts with foam-flecks pale,
And ribbons knotted around ear and tail.

Booted, and pistoled to the very teeth,

The scarlet guard, with ringing heels leaped down,

A glow of pleasantry half hid beneath

The purport of his grave, official frown.

Where had he learned to swear? The roads were vile;

The times atrocious; empires cried for sale;

Yet grief was tempered in the side-long smile

Which hailed the landlord and the proffered ale.

"There"—and his hand convulsively would clench—

"Whether within the dock, or on the bench,

God save old England, and confound the French."

So passed: a smoking cloud of dust alone

Betrayed his passage, leaning to the west.

The Inn, its peace a moment overthrown,

Relapsed again into its dreamy rest.

I heard the landlord's daughter—rooms away—

Fingering the ancient harpsichord:

In tangled cadences I read the lay:

"A Devon maiden dared to love a lord:

And she proved true, but he proved false! Ah,
me!"

There was an instant shift of voice and key,

Shut instrument, and wildering hush for me.

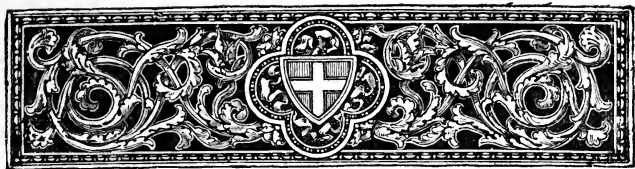
The ancient bed, with rusted damask hung,

The stern brown pictures in the candle-light,

The coifed canary at the window swung,
O'erpowered me with a weird, fantastic fright.
Low moans came from the panels, in the dusk,
And rustling garments trailed along the floor,
The scentless vases breathed anew of musk,
And someone whispered through the oaken door.
'Twas midnight, and from stall and shed below,
The cocks, with outstretched necks, began to crow
And, then, again the bells chimed sweet and slow.

Most ghostlike room—white bed, the couch of peace,
With lavender between the linen set—
Quaint sill, whereon, to charm them to increase,
Full in the moon, stand pots of mignonette;
To-night I am your lord ; sheer cleaves the spire
Above the lightless streets ; no soul's abroad ;
Over the houses, meadow, croft, and byre,
Brood silence and the quietude of God ;
And so till morning, hour succeeding hour,
Timed by the sleepless watcher in the tower,
Till sunrise in the east once more shall flower.





LAST MOMENTS.

ALL day the clouds loom black and dead
Across the barren southern lands;
The wild rain slants before the blast
That blows the swallows from the strands;
Heavily shine the lilac lights
Along the garden's blossomed wall;
The lime trees shake their blanchèd boughs;
The casements clash within the hall;
The windows darken to the east;
She dies before the setting day;
Immortal brightness fixèd burns
Within her dark eyes. Let us pray.

The yellow, matted mignonette
Smells rankly; and the eglantine
Quivers with fear around the porch;
The death-watch ticks; the mastiffs whine;
The struggling, almond-rounded elms
Scatter their sparse bloom; through the floor
Up blows the dust; and, in the storm,
The great clock beats the hours no more—
'Tis dumb. Vast wings are quivering
Amid the universal grey:
Her pulse is low, her cheek is fired,
She dies at twilight. Let us pray.

Three double violets, a leaf
Of blowing myrtle, daisies red,
Blue pansies, and a wasted rose
Are grouped beside the silent bed :
She sees them and her eyes are wet,
For, glimmers through the mournful clime,
The flowered hedgerows round the farm,
And meadows fresh with early thyme.
Speak low ; whilst scarce her breath can stain
The glass, one vast expiring ray
Lights up her brain with splendour wild ;
Faint, and more faintly. Let us pray.

All day the moon, a golden span,
Is bended in the southern air ;
The willows whiten by the brooks ;
The hills are barred with troublous glare.
Sick breathings from the garden plats
The gusty casements penetrate ;
The fierce laburnum winds its arms,
Like scattered fires, around the gate.
Moisten her lips, and cool her brow,
Kiss her cold palms ; the awful day
Is falling, piled with thunder-clouds,
Below the forests. Let us pray.

The twilight thickens ; and, forlorn,
The hawk across the lattice flies ;
The purple-throated finches scream ;
The peacock from the paddock cries.
The wind blows chilly from the west,
Through tracts of orange vapour rolled ;

And broken lines of cattle stream
 Across the bleak, abandoned wold.
 Hark, to the bell ! 'tis curfew time ;
 Kindle the night lamp. God ! how grey
 The light gleams through her closing lids—
 Moon-lighted lilies. Let us pray.

At times, great footfalls labour slow
 Along the arrassed corridors ;
 Old portraits beckon from the walls,
 Quaint faces gaze from open doors.
 In minute calms of rain and wind,
 The swallows whistle in the thatch ;
 The chimneys roar, the gables groan ;
 Thrice shakes the weather-rusted latch.
 Abroad, amid the cloudy air,
 One star shines faintly down the bay.
 The angel of her spirit leans
 Across the threshold. Let us pray.

A blaze of amber splendour streams
 Around the couch from yonder cleft
 Of shadows cirqued before the sun ;
 Her pulse is still ; her soul is left.
 Chilly and white, but glorified,
 The dead face from the curtained gloom
 Gazes, instinct with after life,
 Across the bright, wainscotted room.
 Put out the lights ; quench all the fires ;
 Strew roses on her virgin clay.
 The presences of angels fill
 The house with terror. Let us pray.



THE LILIES.



WALKED amid the lilies, at the morn,
And they were fair,
With trembling chalices that banqueted
On sun and air.

In the cool depths of the green inland lake
I saw them rise,
Chilly and white as stars that break and break
Through autumn skies.

At eventide, slow pacing, I returned ;
Ah ! sad to see !
Gone were the bright inhabitants of morn,
That welcomed me !
What keel of summer skiff, red-beaked and slow,
Had ridden o'er
My white lake-garden, blotting out its lights,
'Twixt shore and shore ?

No answer and no answer. Lucid sprites,
Where'er you be,

The spring is flying backward o'er the hills,
Be patient ye.
I hear the wind-swirled trumpeters of March
On wave and plain;
Be patient, spring is coming quick, and ye
Shall rise again.





GERALDINE'S GARDEN.

THIS is the garden ; its twenty paths,
 Drawn from the dial, merrily run
Down where the autumn's undermaths
 Lie speckled with shadows of leaf and sun ;
Here you may count them one by one :
The stooping stems of the lime and larch,
 The violet haze that folds their roots,
And, out through the great laburnum arch,
 The orchard croft, and its fire of fruits.

There are no steps in the garden yet,
 No sounds, save the bird in the lilac hedge,
No trailing vesture of violet
 Touching the yellowing long box edge,
 Or bending the reeds by the fountain's ledge.
For Geraldine comes in the afternoon,
 When the copper-beech shadow tempers the glare,
And the luminous phantom of the moon
 Is thin and white in the sultry air.

Sweet, ere the wicket shall give you grace
To pass and enter, I pluck this rose,
First of the summer, that in the space
Of the ivied gable tenderly blows,
As a pearl through your twisted tresses glows.
I shall pluck it, and leave it here
Down on the pathway—who knows you'll stray,
With some sweet purpose not over clear,
Out from the beeches, and down this way !

Should you see it, as you come down,
Through the whispering lilacs all alone;
A gleam of gold on your purple gown,
Your hair by the orchard wind back-blown—
In beautiful disorder strown.

Should you see it, my fancy is :
You may take it in careless mood—
Careless at first, then guess and guess,
Till a happy tumult shakes all your blood.

There am I dreaming ; and here you are !
Let me hide in the cloister of the yew,
Where not a glimmer of sun or star
Can trickle the matted branches through,
No, nor a wink of the sultry blue.
Here you come with your airy grace,
Your dainty footfall and sidelong glance,
Whilst over the bloom of your pure, sweet face,
Fifty shadows coquet and dance.

You pass my rose. If it could but speak !
Now you return and pause awhile,
And, over the damask of your cheek,
Slowly ripples a tender smile;
What if one watched you all the while !

Where is the sin if one takes a rose,
Idly cast from a garden seat?
Oh, flattering wind, that comes and goes,
One effort, and blow it straight at her feet.

Were I a woman I'd take the flower,
You are a woman, why, take it then;
How know you 'tis not a fairy dower
Downward dropped from a random rain
Of blossoms hurrying over the plain
To Queen Mab's nuptials? O, love, accept
The earliest rose the garden bears,
It blew up there where the swallows slept
Under the thatch, in the cool spring airs.

'Tis hers! it lies on her beauteous breast!
There where my head and my heart would lie,
In one sweet trance of delicious rest,
Careless how ran the seasons by,
What waxed or waned in the changing sky!
'Tis hers! and she quits the garden seat,
My heart beats louder than I can breathe;
'Tis hers! it lies on her bosom's beat,
And a thought I can guess is underneath.





A P R I L.

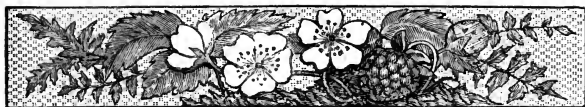
HOW many pipes have dittied unto thee,
Rain-bringer, swathing the blue peaks in mist,
Whose blossom-lights are lit on wold and lea,
Before the tempestings of March have ceast
To stir the heavens ! Thy south wind comes and goes,
And periwinkles twinkle in the grass,
And oxlips faint amid the meadows cool :
Mayhap, the fiery-arched laburnum blows,
Whilst through the emerald darkness thou dost pass,
With swallows skirring round the breezy pool.

With thee, ripe dawns, saffron streaked with white,
Float from the sunrise; and the happy lark,
Leaving the clover-buds to dew and night,
Catches thy voice betwixt the light and dark.
By hooded porches, looking to the sun,
The almond stirreth, and the wallflowers blush,
Ascetic ivies pulse through stem and frond;
The jasmine bells, unfolding one by one,
Take to their amber hearts a phantom flush;
And long-haired willows whiten by the pond.

Season of broken cloud and misty heat,
How the green lanes find echoes for thy horn,
Blown over purple moorlands, to the beat
Of nodding marigolds in marsh and corn!
And thou hast benedictions for the birds,
Couched in the red dead nettles, where they sit
Choiring for seed-time; the poor robin shrills
A pipe of welcome; or, amid the herds,
The martens chirrup greetings, as they flit
Along the barren reaches of the hills.

Lo! as the day behind the chestnuts dies,
And yonder cloud dissolves, half rain, half bloom,
Thy bow is bended in the weeping skies,
Thy shadowy splendour bridges the vast gloom
'Twixt sunset and the stars. A mournful drowse
Falls on the flockless meadows—a low swoon
Tingles along the windless woodlands' rim;
The twilight sickens in the lampless house;
And, merged in vapour, the half-risen moon
Leans on the trunkèd forests, vague and dim.





DRIFTING.

FLOAT, little bark, down yonder stream,
By many a margin fringed with bloom
Of lilies, amber-leaved and wan,
And poplars fair with silver gleam;
Float round yon island in the sun,
Slide slowly through the winking gloom
Of many an immemorial wood,
Whose trunks make cloisters for the flood.

Blow southern wind, and fill her wake
With creamy swirlings, faint and sweet—
Go, break the sunlight on her sail;
Loosen the blossom in the brake,
And waft, from primrose plot and vale,
Their odours rich and exquisite.
Go, little bark, the shining west
Shall find thy prow a nook of rest.

Speed, happy lovers, stream and breeze
Glide with ye towards the peaceful night,

O babble softly in her ear,
Dark-violet river, till she sees
The golden-hornèd star appear,
Suspent in azure mist and light,
And hears, across the sobbing foam,
Bell-voices and the songs of home.

Float on, float on ! The heavens are fair,
The last flame burns amid the leaves,
The last bird pipes on yonder bough,
The last crow blackens the rich air,
The cistus drowns on the eaves,
The lustrous freshet trickles slow ;
The earth has lost the sun, and lo !
Around the oaks the brown bats go.





AMY'S SWALLOW.

DEAD is Amy's friendly swallow—
Bird which dared no flight toward morn
Till the sycamores were fallow
And the reapers slew the corn,
And the ash was red, or shorn

Underneath her eaves he lingered,
All the full-leafed summer days,
Till the hazels bent brown-fingered,
And the grassy country ways
Winked, at eve, through rolling haze

All his fellows had departed—
Flown abreast across the seas—
He, by wayward instincts thwarted,
Stayed, to haunt her lattices—
Her grey porches—her sad trees.

Soon came winds afraught with sorrow
Bee and bird alike to tame;
Dreary morrow chased to-morrow—
Dawns surcharged with storm and flame:
But for him no morrow came.

On the pent roof, balanced lightly,
Dolorous he watched the sun
In the east disclosing whitely—
Reddening till his span was run
With the sullen sunset gun.

Then, awaked to wild resistance,
To imprisoning of Fate,
Amy's swallow dared the distance
'Twixt him and his southern mate :
Amy's swallow dared too late !

For the cruel tempests brayed him—
Whirled him in their fierce unrest—
Blew him, dead, to land, and laid him
Close by the belovèd nest
Which the spring suns charm the best.

Darling, could thy kisses waken
Purple lightnings in his eyes—
Plume those wings so rudely shaken,
Once again, with clarion cries,
He would speed through earth and skies.

Thy caresses, Pet, avail not,
Ah, if I should tempt the foam,
May my winging backward fail not,
Finding such a tender home
As the heart that mourns *his* doom.

Hapless swallow ! Happy swallow !
Outcast guest of storm and sleet ;
Many a mate of thine might follow,
Were he sure of bliss complete—
Dying at my lady's feet.



THE OLD VIOLIN.



OLD violin, sweet friend and love,
The world is dark ; we're growing old ;
The light is vanishing above,
No more I see your strings of gold.
The love-knots which our Ellen tied
Around your carved neck long ago,
Have faded in the friendless tide
Of summer heat and winter snow.
Old violin,
Dear violin,
Companion of my wanderings,
Your golden moans,
Your plaintive tones,
Plume memory with radiant wings.
The sunny fields through which we've strayed,
The woods we've sought from sun and rain,
The pebbled brook and chestnut glade,
Like blessed phantoms fill my brain.
Our welcomes as, at set of sun,
From purple heaths and hills forlorn,
The villagers with labour done
Came dancing through the yellow corn.
Old violin,
Dear violin,
Once more like laughter touch my ears,

Once more arise
And fill my eyes
With floods of unavailing tears.

How often, in those olden times,
When shadows folded all the east,
And the white chapel's pious chimes
Tolled sweetly for the rural feast,
Have you and I, in happy trance,
One green field from the dusty road,
Seen the brown groups of harvest dance
Till brows were red and ringlets flowed !
Old violin,
Dear violin,
Even now, with blinded eyes, I see
The roses red
That twined your head,
The brown ale foaming at my knee.

Solace of my declining life,
Heaven blessed us with tranquillity,
In all the moods of peace and strife,
No pair could more contented be.
We left the monarchs, crowned above,
To act their wise or foolish parts,
And, with our strains inspired by love,
Ruled the great universe of hearts.
O d violin,
Dear violin,
Though fame and fortune could not last,
We have no fears
For coming years,
And no repentings for the past !



THE BIRD'S NEST.



WHEN clouds hang low on moors and seas,
Ere, deep in woods, anemones
Make twinkling firmaments for spring,
The red-cheeked village children stray
By hedges mossed with red and grey,
In whose green lights the linnets sing.
O happy sound ! if then be heard,
Beneath some bough fresh-leaved and warm,
The chirrup of a startled bird—
The quick wing apprehending harm ;
For there quick eyes are sure to find,
In coyest ambushes of twigs,
The rounded nest, the clustered twigs,
Slow swaying to the pulsing wind.

Love was the architect who drew
The lines symmetrical and true,
And winged their substance from afar—
From moist, sheep-whitened fields and brakes—
From marges of reed-shadowed lakes,
Gleaming below the crescent star.
The sharp-plumed spear-grass tribute gave,
The nettle yielded up its crown ;
And chased o'er field and freshet wave,
Here came the captured thistledown,

To build an airy palace fine,
Where in the hours of moon and dew,
The little birds might watch the blue,
And all day long the sun might shine.

'Twas built; and in the twinkling shade
Of branches crossed and diverse braid,
The mother sat with brooding wings,
Hearing from boughs that drooped above,
Her mate's shrill canticle of love
Descend in crystal twitterings.
But he is hushed, and she has flown
To some red gable, when she sees
Her fairy chamber overthrown,
With all its leafy pageantries.
No full-fledged throat shall cheep to her
What time along the flowered grass—
One flash of mail—the bee shall pass,
And cones grow golden on the fir.

Brown villagers, whose hands have rent
The roof, the curtain of the tent,
Too many a day shall grieve for this—
Sad days, when never shall be heard
The sweet bereavement of the bird
From brake or pendent precipice!
Then, when the autumn red for corn,
And knotted fagots, treads the woods—
When fogs rise yellow through the morn,
And all the land's a-wail with floods—
You'll say in whispers tremulous:
"Oh, had we spared the linnets' nest,
Their brood upon our eaves might rest,
And all the long day sing for us."



MARGUERITE.

THE wind that from the north, all day,
Had blown the swallows from the seas,
Dropped round the gables quaint and grey,
And touched the golden poplar trees.

Brown autumn, from the woods afar,
Looked through the setting lights of morn;
Dim in the west one sickly star
Leant on the level plains of corn.
While sadly, at the casement white,
Pale Marguerite looked wistfully
Towards the dumb star, and often cried,
“When will the angels come for me?”

Like wingèd spirits from the bough
Of the great poplar rained the leaves;
The white rose in its autumn blow
Dropped snow-like from the gusty eaves.
Red, to the fountain's sanded stone,
With seeded mouth the robin flew.
And still with mingled mist and moan
The north wind through the garden blew.

“Blow, oh, blow,” said Marguerite,
And turned her face unto the sea.
“The day is breaking; but alas!
When will the angels come for me?”

The vapour on the low, blue hills
Was reddened with the morning fire,
The weeded wheels of mountain mills
Showered the green waters down the bire.
Swift fled the brook across the lawn,
Thick with the radiant fallen leaves,
And like a spirit in the dawn
The swallow shouted from the eaves—
“The day is come,” said Marguerite,
“The bird is piping in the tree,
The stars are setting—but, alas!
When will the angels come for me?”

“I hear the low-voiced convent bells
Come floating from their forest fold.
The pilgrims kneel beside the wells,
The opening east is fired with gold.
Afar I see the shining walls
Of a great city in the skies,
And countless wings whose splendour falls
Over the gates of Paradise.
The night is fled, the day is come,
The open doors of Heaven I see.
White hands are stretched from out the clouds—
The blessed angels come for me.”





MY JACK.

A LONG the roof-line, sharp and red,
The black crows stand against the sky,
And windy clamourings are bred
Within the elm trees standing nigh.

Hard clicks the chapel's evening bell,
The mill-wheel answers dreamily;
Whilst from the deep carnation sky
A glory rolls down field and fell :
It smites the mountain to the north,
It burns upon the window free,
Where Jack stands up, with eyes of mirth
And clapping hands, to welcome me.

Dear lad, again, the wild gold hair
Makes ringlets in the autumn wind,
And in those eyes, so blue and fair,
The sweet, fresh soul has grown more kind
How quaintly, too, those arms are set—
In indolent, and frank repose,
Upon the long green box, where grows
The wild thyme mixed with mignonette !

O happy shout ! the choiring lark,
Caged coyly by the glinting pane,
Ne'er uttered, between light and dark,
A blither, a more natural strain.

Come down, and dance into my arms,
My heart shall have full holiday ;
Come, let us range by smoking farms,
And popped girths of wheat and hay.
The scythe is glittering in the grass,
The weeds are burning on the hill,
The blackbird's voice is scarcely still—
He keeps a song for Candlemas.
O hasten, ere the stars are up,
And bring the moonrise in their wake ;
Haste ere the lily folds its cup,
And vanishes into the lake.

Your hand in mine, your mouth to mine,
The perfect, pure-lipped rosy shell
That on the feast of Valentine,
Seven months ago, bade me farewell !
Ah, Jack, that voice was in my ear
When in the night-time by the Main
The German house-tops hissed with rain,
The chimneys shuddered far and near.
Against the clouds the old house rose,
Behind it spread the rolling wolds,
And you stood in the privet close
Among the yellow marigolds.

That dream is fact ; we too again
By long beloved hedges walk,
And separation's bitter pain
Dies in the music of your talk.

The stifled pang, the injured sense,
The shame of doubt, the wrong of sin,
Turn into benedictions in
Your clear sun-lighted innocence.
Look, there's the sun behind the wood,
The clouds one puff of golden gloom ;
Now for the night's divinest mood—
Low laughters and the lamp-lit room.





THE SWALLOW.



WHILST warm and deep the summer lies
Amid the dreamy hills and vales,
With visions of remotest skies,
And seas that gleam with shining ails :
Merrily then the swallows run,
Chasing the shadows and the sun,
By lighted tarns and liliated floods ;
Or wheel round some moss-crustèd spire,
That takes the daylight's freshest fire,
Above its sanctuary of woods.
This is the time the swallow sings—
The cheeriest moment of his stay—
Ere yet, with swiftly cleaving wings,
He flies, flies, flies away.

When winds across the mere blow cold,
And half the air is dark with rain,
When forest leaves are laced with gold,
And barns o'erflow with brown-huskèd grain ;
By shores that hear the ocean's boom,
The swallows circle in the gloom,

Chattering jarringly and loud.
Their home, at times, they cry, is far
Below the crescent and the star
That tops the crimson evening cloud.
Drearly then the swallow sings,
The sweet south beckons him away,
And thither on exulting wings,
He flies, flies, flies away.

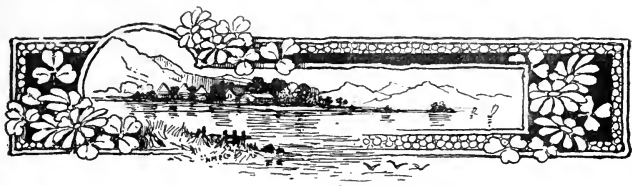
The pilot of the unseen air,
Along whose track the lightnings leap,
By tokens manifold and fair
Allures the swallows o'er the deep.
Through storms that teem with misty dew,
Through heavens of mingled cloud and blue,
They follow fast, with day and night,
Till over slopes and plains where shines
The campanile amidst the vines ;
They dash into the clime of light,
They rest upon a fairer shore,
They chorus to a louder lay.
O wanderers ! will ye evermore
Fly, fly, fly away.

Deem not the day will always last,
Deem not the rose will ever blow,
Unchilled by the recurrent blast,
Amid the land of wind and snow.
From yonder Alps, whose giant spars
Seem shafts of fire to prop the stars—
Form where the waves round Venice shout,
The headlong tempest yet shall come,
And beat to earth the vineyards' bloom,
And blow the lamp of summer out.

Strong is the certitude of change,
O swallow ! thou wilt have thy stay,
And then again, impelled to range,
Wilt fly, fly, fly away.

Sad brother, heir to flesh and cark,
The sun not always lights thy path ;
The winter comes austere and dark,
And fills thy setting day with wrath.
Remember, when thy soul is torn
With longings for departed morn,
And pangs of manifold distress,
Beyond the vapours of this breath,
Apast the cloudy veils of death,
Shines the clear morn of righteousness.
Be faithful until God decide,
To break this crucible of clay,
That thou may'st cast its shards aside,
To wing thee to eternal day.





WHERE?



MINUTE gone. She lingered here, and then
Passed, with face backward turned, through
yonder door;

The free fold of her garments' damask grain
Fashioned a hieroglyph upon the floor,
Then straightened, as it reached the corridor.

Down the long passages, I heard her feet
Moving—a crepitating music slow—
And next her voice, an echo exquisite,
But modulated in its tender flow—
A harp through which the evening breezes blow.

Upon the table there were books and flowers
And Indian trifles; a Mahratta blade
Whose ivory hilt sustained a cirque of towers,
Wedded by the inexplicable braid
On Vishnu's shrine at harvest full moon laid.

The curtains shook; a scarlet glamour crossed
The stained wood and the white walls of the room—
Wavered, retreated, trembled, and was lost
Between the statue's plinth, the console's gloom,
And yon tall urn of yellow blossomed broom.

I see her face look backward at me yet,
Just as she glided by the cypress chair;
Her happy eyes with happy tears are wet,
And, over bust and shoulders, cool and fair,
Stream the black coils of her abundant hair.

In what far past—in what abysm of time
Have I beheld that self-same look before?
There was no difference of hour or clime:
A garment made a figure on a floor,
Which straightened sweeping towards a corridor.

Rare trifles were around me, curtains blew,
And worked their restless phantasms on a ceil;
A sidelong bird across a casement flew,
Upon the table glittered graven steel,
And a low voice thrilled me with soft appeal.

All things were there, as all things are to-day,
But where? I half remember, as a dream,
Such accidents, in epochs long grown grey—
Such glory, but with ever-narrowing beam,
From which I'm severed by some shoreless stream.

Have I forgotten—is this flash of light,
Which makes the brain and pulse together start,
Some ray reflected from the infinite
Worlds, where I mayhap have left a heart—
The Infinite of which I am a part?

Who shall unriddle it? Return, sweet wife,
And with thy presence sanctify this pain;
Cling to my side, O faithful help of life!
Lest, in the hour when night is on the wane,
The destinies divide us two again.



GOETHE'S HOUSE.

HIRSCHGRABEN 23, FRANKFORT.



QUAINT Frankfort nestles by the Main ;
The broad flood rolls below the town
With many a foaming warp and strain,
Past vineyards, mills, and bridges brown.
The streets are thick with press of trade ;
Gilt tabards flout the tavern door ;
Stout burghers in the market prate ;
Housed in the grim cathedral's shade,
The red-capped country merchants roar ;
The sharp-spurred Prussian stalks elate.

We left the dusky gallery,
Where, high above dark maple floors,
Gleamed from the panels, three and three,
The gold ghosts of the Emperors.
From backgrounds mailed Byzantine-wise,
The gorgeous shadows glimmered through—
Procession vast of son and sire !
There one robe counted fifty dyes,
Here this one streamed, a world of blue ;
But, rounding all, a flare of fire.

Who mourns, we asked, for dynasties,
To whom men's hearts paid bloody toll ?

Through simpler forms, one hears, one sees,
The mightier Dynasties of Soul.
Your Charles looms down a phantom fine;
Your Robert is of regal mould;
How bravely Julian wears his scars!
For us, we love a fairer line,
Who, if their faults were manifold,
Did sweeter work below the stars.

He smiled on us, the wrinkled man
Who led us through the echoing town,
Relit his pipe of porcelain,
And turned the spectral staircase down.
We followed close through twenty ways,
On whose rough pave his slippers dropped
Soft as in daylight moves the mouse;
At last, emerging from the maze,
Before an open door we stopped:
"And this," said he, "is Goethe's House."

That picture! We had crossed the square,
As one goes swiftly through a dream;
All round, the houses tall and fair
Turned to us fronts of myriad gleam.
O'er many a grotesque window top,
Winged steeds on clouds and lightnings stamped,
Perk faces leered from vines and scrolls;
Lean dragons sprawled on stall and shop,
Maned lions amid roses ramped—
Lutes, lyres, lamps, torches, aureoles!

Hirschgraben they have named the street:
Its gables, sheer, triangular,
Blotched by recurrent frost and heat,
Give issue thin to moon or star;

Sly dormer casements twinkle high,
Deep doors below keep wind and gloom,
Long halls show gleams of garden green;
Huge chimneys slant against the sky,
Odd shadows brood in every room,
And cobwebs droop from wall and screen.

And this, indeed, was once his home !
(Triumphant Number Twenty-three !)
These tiles he trod—these stairs he clomb,
Up high as eye can strain to see.
Perhaps he leaned across this sill,
And watched, above the courtyard wall,
That deep-aisled chestnut gather leaf,
What time the swallow's cry is shrill,
When winds and showers are musical,
And clouds are low, and light is brief.

We pitied him whose starved critique
Would mar the quiet of the place,
Preferring the austere Antique
To our full-blooded, riper grace.
Fool ! leave to us this precious hour,
The glass case and its treasured freight—
The blotted leaf, the fretted glove,
The rusted quill that bore such flower !
The mildewed seal, the faded date,
The page that tells of Werther's love.

A time-old music haunts the place;
(Outside the Strass for tumult roars),
Strange lights across the ceiling race,
Strange shadows lurk about the doors.
Here all his ribboned letters lie;
A violet, five cones of pine—
Gathered in what forgotten woods !

A pencilled sketch from Italy—

Three peaks above a land of wine,
White with the rush of torrent floods.

“I knew him,” quoth our wrinkled guide,
“When I was young, and he grown old;
His great, broad temples, either side,
Were touched with hard and grizzled gold.
His dreams were vast, his words were few,
Yet sown with tangled germ and seed.

He was our clear apocalypse,
Who plumbed our better future true,
Rousing the world from thought to deed
With trumpet-blasts of fifty lips.

“He died—we bragged about his fame,
The thing least precious which he gave;
Came after-years, and spikes of flame
Made fiery garlands for his grave—
Sharp flames that stung our dullish sense,
Too tame to face the Difficult,
And sloughing strength in dose and trance—
Fierce fires whose spikes meant no Pretence.
You smiling ask: The great result?—
Look up to us—look down on France!”

So babbled he, abstracted—lost
In the weird measures of his strain,
Till we had gained the street, and crossed
The market leaning on the Main.
His voice pursued us through the night,
Long after Frankfort's heaped-up eaves
Grew black against a heaven of wine—
Till Mayence blossomed into light,
And one saw through the vineyards' leaves
The moon-white levels of the Rhine.



WAITING.

THOU of the sunny head,
With lilies garlanded,
And bosom fairer than the blown sea-foam ;
O Spring, in what waste desert dost thou stay
Whilst leaves await thy presence to unfold ?
The branches of the lime with frost are grey,
And all imprisoned is the crocus' gold :
Come, sweet Enchantress, come !
Though, in the sombre west,
Thy star hath lit his crest—
Pale Phosphor, fronting full the withered moon—
Thy violets are sepultured in snow,
Thy daisies twinkle never in the sun,
Rude winds throughout the ruined forests blow,
And silent is the dove's melodious moan :
Enchantress, hasten soon.
White are the country ways,
And white the tangled maze,
Loved of the oxlip and the creeping thyme ;
Bare shakes the poplar on the sullen ridge,
Cold glooms the spectral mill above the flood ;
Hoarse torrents stream beneath the ivied bridge,
And lightnings strike the darkness of the wood :
Enchantress, bless our clime.

No bloom of dewy morn,
No freshly blossomed thorn,
Gladdens the importunings of sad eyes ;
The day wastes drearily though cloud and sleet ;
Over the watered meadows and stark vales
The night comes down impetuous and fleet,
And ships and cities shiver in the gales :
O fair Enchantress, rise.

Arise, and bring with thee
The rathe bud for the tree,
The healing sunshine for the trampled grass,
Loose tendrils for the boughs which bless the eaves,
And shield the swallows in the rainy hours,
The pendent flames which the laburnum heaves,
And faint scents for the wind-stirred lilac flowers :
Enchantress, breathe and pass.

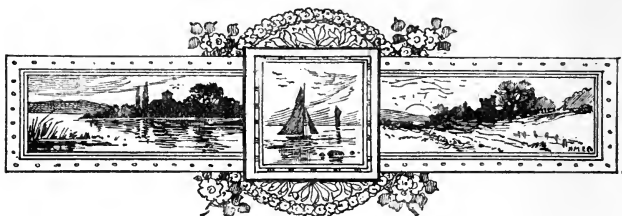
Men knew, and kissed, of old,
Thy garment's glittering fold—
Thy radiant footprint on the mead or waste ;
Earth kindled at thine advent—altars burned,
And ringing cymbals bade the hearths be gay ;
But now, in sunless solitudes inurned,
Thou leav'st the world unto reluctant day :
O haste, Enchantress, haste !

The larks shall sing again,
Between the sun and rain,
The brown bee through the flowered pastures roam,
There shall be music in the frozen woods,
A gurgling carol in the rushing brook,
An odour in the half-unbosomed bud,
And dancing foxgloves in each forest nook :
Then, come, Enchantress, come.



A VOICE.

AMID a nunnery of dewy flowers
Walked the moist morning, many years ago;
The pulses of grey fountains notched the hours,
The dial reddened in the broadening glow.
And one came to me through the garden paths,
Pausing amid the scented lavender,
Under the lilacs steeped in purple baths,
And rooted deep in golden moss and myrrh.
And lifting up an amber viol, she
Sang to the sun and heavens and dying dusk,
Till all the fruit trees breathed of thyme and musk,
Till the green peaches burst their fragrant husk
And hung like jewels upon branch and tree.
And I awoke to hear in saintly sighs
A sweet voice rise and fade into the skies.



THREE TIMES.

I.



IN the days of the Paschal season, the beautiful
Easter time,
When the cowslip lights in the dark, damp grass,
and the heats of the summer clime
Are meshed in the long-flowered lilac; when the rich
laburnum wakes
A million fires in its boughs that call to the blossomed
furze o' the brakes,
Our darling to earth was given. She came with the
redbreast's note,
When the robin's bosom is damasked, and the wind-
blown swallows float
All day o'er the meres of the inland. She came, and
we thanked our God,
For the sense of a holier rest fell round the threshold
of our abode.

She stretched to the sun her happy hands, dimpled in
pink and white,
And her laugh was blithe as the voice that rings 'twixt
the dark and the morning light,

When the larks are lost up in heaven, and day after day
she grew,
Till the wee, bright bud of infancy to the flower of girl-
hood blew;
Ah! happy times, when at noon she chased in the
gardens the butterflies,
As they turned to the sun their soft wings stained with
crimson and amber dyes,
Or chirruped back to the goldfinch, swung on a purple
spray
Of the mezereon, as amid the flowers of the dial-plot shelay.
I know not why, but I often thought I saw in our
Helen's eyes
Dawn-like breaks of the dreamfulness of an inner
Paradise,—
Some sweet thought shadowed across her soul—a
moment lit in her brain,
Leaving behind an after-pause of passionate bliss and pain,
For she lived upon sunlike fancies—said that stars i' the air
Were God's own angels who watched the world for ever
and ever there;
That the moon was the olden Eden; and the blaze of the
evening west
The golden city where God's beloved for ever and aye
found rest.
There is a voice in the white-leaved limes, like the hum
of a meadow brook,
Low on the grass of the lawn there shake the leaves of
an open book;
And I hear sweet gusts of laughter; our Helen is laugh-
ing and singing,
Above her head, in the blue crisp air, the sycamore bells
are ringing.

Sing on, sing on, for heaven flees past, and the clouds
shall soon dislimn,
And there lieth beyond their tender haze a land where
the days are dim,
Where the richest fruit holds ashes of comprehended
truth,
Whose sun is the glimmering gleam that falls from the
peaks of the hills of youth.

II.

Home from the wide, wild world—home, to us, back
again
Our darling Helen has come, and sits by the southern
window pane,
Thence looks she o'er leagues of pasture and girdles of
chestnut woods,
And merry parklands from which there breaks the flash
of approaching floods.
She sighs and says she is happy, and sighing in silence
turns
Till the maiden rose of her dimpled cheek with the blush
of a first love burns.
Hark! 'tis a step on the garden path, O exquisite toned
ear,
Whose sense prefigured the footfalls ere they themselves
were here.

He is seated beside her—beside my hope and my pride,
The casement in twain lies open—O Truth, in the world
outside,
Know'st thou one fairer or sweeter, brighter or better
than she,
Whose slender fingers are tangled in the dark oak
rosary?

Watch how the wind o' the orchard ruffles her yellow hair,
Till the tender rim of her gentle ear to her lover's eye
lies bare—

Till the fair abstraction that lurketh like moonlight on
her face

Breaks at its touch and beareth some still diviner grace.

She will leave us, ere April is back with its rainy charm,
To rest her head on another breast—to lean on another
arm:

For thus the great world slideth, and its thick mutations
range

From cycle to epicycle, through all the circles of change.
God bless her where'er she goeth, my darling, my idol-
child;

As a dove in the clefts of the mountains, her way be
undefiled,

Happy be she as the singer who rose in the morning's
calms,

To meet her soul in the garden, 'mid myrrh-blooms, aloes,
and palms.

There comes from the woodland chapel the tremulous
sound of bells,

For the silver-throated steeple's a-reel; and the hearts
of the mighty dells

O'erflow with myriad echoes; the deep bell-music grows
As forth, from her home in the lilacs, the bride to the
bridal goes.

Shine out, O day, from the forest of clouds, where thou
liest hoar,

Spread her a mile of sun 'twixt this and the holy door.

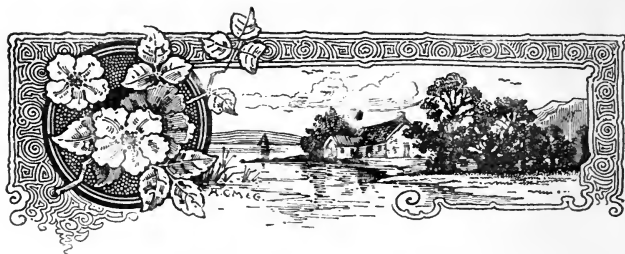
Haste up, O happy summer, from tropic darkness and heat,
That the lilies may mix with the violets, and be blessed
by her virgin feet.

III.

Night over winter land and sea, and the dark is planet-proof,
Nought doth shine save the frozen snow that clings to the peaked roof—
Nought doth shine save the windows three, above the weary lawn,
And the white, white face of the dead that looks patiently towards the dawn.
A thin hand laid on a pulseless heart in the quiet of the room,
Feet that come and steps that go—low whispers in the gloom—
A smoke-stained lamp that swings and flares in the gusty corridor,
And haggard eyes that wait yet fear the black plumes at the door.
On the outposts of the morning, 'twixt the beatings of the clock,
Far below the barren moorland, blithely crows the red manse cock.
Lo! the window panes grow yellow, for the falling snow has ceased,
And an atmosphere of saffron floods the spaces of the east.
Give me peace, and leave me darkness; I am tired of the sun,
I am sick of moon and daylight, time and clime, for she has gone;
Inward to the land of silence—inward to the darksome land,
Bearing palms of holy patience in the hollows of her hand.

Yesterday, and she was with us, watching us with glassy
eyes,
In whose glare I knew returnèd old dream-thoughts of
Paradise.
Low and sweet she spoke of spring time, when the brooks
should run again,
And the cowslip and the wild thyme waken to the fruitful
rain.
“Look!” she said, “I see the summer”—and she raised
her head and gazed
On the casement where the glory of a brazen sunset
blazed—
Caught her heart, and murmured something in the faint-
ness of her breath,
Some sweet words, alas! delivered only in the ear of
Death.

Dear one, in whatever heaven thy meek soul hath found
abode—
Think of us, who linger distant from the presence of our
God.
Unto earth we give thine ashes, blessed with solemn song
and rite,
Knowing, trusting they shall blossom, when the solid
roof of night
Shall roll backward into chaos. Hark! it is the morn-
ing bell,—
Pallid lips and closèd eyelids—dearest, sweetest love,
farewell.
Night is past, the hateful daylight crawls across the
chamber floor;
God sustain me—God uphold me—the black plumes are
at the door.



THE FUCHSIA.



WITHIN the mountain lodge we sat,
At night, and watched the slanted snow,
Blown headlong over hill and moor,
And heard, from dell and tarn below,
The loosened torrents thundering slow.

'Twas such a night as drowns the stars,
And blots the moon from out the sky;
We could not see our favourite larch,
Yet heard it rave incessantly,
As the white whirlwinds drifted by.

Sad thoughts were near; we might not bar
Their stern intrusion from the door;
Till you rose meekly, lamp in hand,
And, from an inner chamber, bore
A book renowned by sea and shore.

And, as you flung it open, lo! •
Between the pictured leaflets, lay—
Embalmed by processes of Time—
A gift of mine—a fuchsia spray—
I gathered, one glad holiday.

Then, suddenly, the chamber changed,
And we forgot the snow and wind ;
Once more we paced a garden path,
With even feet and even mind—
That red spray in your hair confined.

The cistus trembled by the porch,
The shadow round the dial moved :
I knew this, though I marked them not,
For I had spoken, unreprieved,
And, dreamlike, knew that I was loved.

Sweet wife ! when falls a darker night,
May some pure flower of memory,
Hid in the volume of the soul,
Bring back, o'er life's tormented sea,
As dear a peace to you and me.





THE OLD HOUSE BY THE MERE.



KNEW not thou wert gone—

Knew not that thou hadst flown,

Missed not the flower-pots on the window sill,

Nor the bird's cage within the cool, cool door;

Saw not the vacant shadow on the floor,

Nor missed the clock-beat in the chambers, still;

For there were heat and blossom in the eaves,

And shaking twinklings in the laurel leaves,

And on the upland, golden sheaves,

And hedges black and roan:

Madeline, Madeline!

Back swung the rusted gate—

Back to the yew-walk straight.

The thin, white pathway wandered to the house;

Down on the garden glared the chimney stacks,

The brown wall gleamed with all its mossy cracks

Through the dead peaches' crossed and tangled boughs.

I heard the robin on the cistern sing,
I saw the goldfinch shake his violet wing,
Half reddened by the suns of spring
And felt not desolate:
Madeline, Madeline!

The green rime clogged the pane,
The glass was plashed with rain,
Within the low porch where we often sat,
The barren vine had fastened on the seat
And hid the oaken carving, quaint and sweet,
And hugged the threshold like a rush-wove mat.
And Psyche's statue in the dust lay prone,
The amber-sanded hour-glass overthrown;
Ah! then I knew that thou wert gone—
The wild truth dazed my brain:
Madeline, Madeline!

O lonely, lonely rooms,
O dear familiar glooms,
Fair pictures shining from the sunny wall.
Old-fashioned graces hid in every nook,
Bright chambers which thy feet had long forsook,
Abandonment and grief sat mute in all.
I flung the lattice open to the day,
I leant above the flower-beds, broad and gay,
And heard the fountain sift its spray,
With weary interval:
Madeline, Madeline!

I called thee by thy name,
And thought thy silence blame;
No dear voice answered through the silent air,

No footstep sounded in the corridor,
No bright face glittered at the open door—
I and the mocking echoes wandered there.
My beautiful, my own, what space of earth
Doth hold thee? From what happy twilight hearth
Speed thy pensive fancies forth—

Half passion and half dream?

Madeline, Madeline!

Thy face is near my eyes,
Years bring it no disguise—
Neither thy vesper sigh, nor matin tear.
Thou art the highest star in memory's sky;
A little cloud drifts slowly, slowly by,
And takes thy glory to its atmosphere.

I see thee not, but know thy fixèd home,
Thy long light trickles through the waning gloom;
The riven vapour breaks in bloom,—

Bloom dropped from Paradise:

Madeline, Madeline!

Rise, tender, mystic night,
Rise on the skirts of light;
Give me thy fires upon my dreary way,—
Past the wild mere, and down the solemn wold;
Shower, autumn, shower thy slowly-garnered gold
Around the dim house, in the fading day,
Slide sweetly o'er the roof that veiled her sleep,
In those old years lost in the mournful deep
Of times that neither sow nor reap,

Holy and infinite:

Madeline, Madeline!

Blue, on the misty down,
Gleams the belated town;
The vast heavens throb with palpitating fire—

A cold bloom wanders on the darkening bay,
A cool sail glitters to the wasted day,
And dipping, wavering, floats me nigher and nigher.
Before the languid pulses of the breeze,
Speed we to-night across the yeasty seas
To stranger clouds and stars than these ;
 My heart, my soul, my own :
 Madeline, Madeline !





A JULY DAWN.



WE left the city, street and square,
With lamplights glimmering through and
through,
And turned us toward the suburb, where—
Full from the east—the fresh wind blew.

One cloud stood overhead the sun—
A glorious trail of dome and spire—
The last star flickered, and was gone ;
The first lark led the matin choir.

Wet was the grass beneath our tread,
Thick-dewed the bramble by the way ;
The lichen had a lovelier red,
The elder-flower a fairer grey.

And there was silence on the land,
Save when, from out the city's fold,
Stricken by Time's remorseless wand,
A bell across the morning tolled.

The beeches sighed through all their boughs ;
The gusty pennons of the pine
Swayed in a melancholy drowse,
But with a motion sternly fine.

One gable, full against the sun,
Flooded the garden-space beneath
With spices, sweet as cinnamon,
From all its honeysuckled breadth.

Then crew the cocks from echoing farms,
The chimney-tops were plumed with smoke,
The windmill shook its slanted arms,
The sun was up, the country woke !

And voices sounded 'mid the trees
Of orchards red with burning leaves,
By thick hives, sentinelled by bees—
From fields which promised tented sheaves ;

Until the day waxed to excess,
And on the misty, rounding grey—
One vast, fantastic wilderness,
The glowing roofs of London lay.





GUESSES.



KNOW a maiden ; she is dark and fair,
With curvèd brows and eyes of hazel hue,
And mouth, a marvel, delicately rare,
Rich with expression, ever quaint yet new.
O happy fancy ! there she, leaning, sits,
One little palm against her temples pressed,
And all her tresses winking like brown elves ;
The yellow fretted laurels toss in fits,
The great laburnums droop in swoons of rest,
The blowing woodbines murmur to themselves.

What does she think of, as the daylight floats
Along the mignonetted window-sills,
And flame-like, overhead, with ruffled throats,
The bright canaries twit their seeded bills ?
What does she think of ? Of the jasmine flower
That, like an odorous snowflake, opens slow,
Or of the linnet on the topmost briar,
Or of the cloud that, fringed with summer shower,
Floats up the river spaces, blue and low,
And marged with lilies like a bank of fire ?

Ah, sweet conception ! enviable guest,
Lodged in the pleasant palace of her brain,
Summoned a minute, at her rich behest,
To wander fugitive the world again.
What does she think of ? Of the dusty bridge,
Spanning the mallow shadows in the heat,
And porching in its hollow the cool wind ;
Or of the poplar on the naked ridge ;
Or of the bee that, clogged with nectared feet,
Hums in the gorgeous tulip-bell confined ?

At times, her gentle brows are archly knit
With tangled subtleties of gracious thought ;
At times, the dimples round her mouth are lit
By rosy twilights from some image caught.
What does she think of ? Of the open book
Whose pencilled leaves are fluttering on her knee ;
Or of the broken fountain in the grass ;
Or of the dumb and immemorial rook,
Perched like a wingèd darkness on the tree,
And watching the great clouds in silence pass ?

I know not ; myriad are the phantasies
That trouble the still dreams of maidenhood,
And wonderful the radiant entities
Shaped in the passion of her brain and blood.
O Fancy ! through the realm of guesses fly,
Unlock the rich abstraction of her heart
(Her soul is second in the mystery) :
Trail thy gold meshes through the summer sky ;
Question her tender breathings as they part,
Tell me, Revealer, that she thinks of me.



TO SPRING.



FROM the grey wicket of the morn,
Under the shadow-braided skies,
With violet twilights in thine eyes,
Thou walkest across the fresh, green corn.

I see thy pathway in the dark,
Thy sweet feet print the fields with light
With primroses and snowdrops white,
And silver on the larch tree's bark.

I know thy coming. Underneath
The black and leafless lattices,
There comes the moan of blowing trees,
The wallflower's faint ascetic breath.

I know thy coming—for the air
Blows soft upon the sleeted pane,
And drips the eaves with amber rain,
And scatters odours everywhere.

Far down, amid the shallows dank
Of the cold freshets, mallow-blooms
Are broadening in the willow glooms,
And cowslips flame on brae and bank.

O peace, O rest ! Thou wintry jar
Of piping nights and mornings cold,
With fogs upon the sunless wold,
And thunders in the west afar;
Leave us a while, that we may rise,
With bright hands on the happy latch,
That we may go abroad and catch
The season's passion from the eyes
Of fringed daisies that espy
The sun's return, before the furze
Turns golden; or the swallow stirs
His dusk wing in our faithless sky.
On many a sandy river shore,
And emerald lawn, the chestnut stands,
And shines along the pasture lands,
The gleam of blossomed sycamore.
And in the hours of sunshine brief,
But barred with shadows every one,
On gables looking to the sun,
The honeysuckle gathers leaf.
Blessed be thou, sweet time of spring,
And not alone that thou dost come,
Thy white arms piled with freshened bloom,
And songs that make the woodland ring.
No more amid the myrrhs and palms,
Of highest heaven, dost thou repose,
And feel upon thy crownless brows
The light of ever-crimson calms.
Thine aim is higher. Thou art the type
Of resurrection—of the spring
That yet shall wake the sleeping thing,
When God is pleased, and time is ripe.



HAPPY CHRISTMASES.

I.



IN the December weather, grey and grim,
In the December twilight, keen and cold,
Stood the farmhouse on the green-reached hill
Piled with thatched roofs, mellowed into gold;
Under the dark eaves trailed the famished vines,
Blood-ribbed skeletons of autumn days,
And the quaint windows, looking to the downs,
Flickered and darkened in the ruddy blaze.

Three leagues around, the meadows to the moon
Yearned like a silver dreamland, faint and white,
Below the deep-ploughed road a little pool
Glimmered breezily in the tender light.
The great ash caught the glory as it dropped
From bough to bough fantastically fair,
And the stars looked into its leafless heart,
Through shifting vapours and translucent air.

Wild looked the gardens round the drowsy house,
The laurel sparkled in the sifting frost;
But the white gables, where the roses grew,
In the dank atmosphere of fog, were lost;

The wicket swang with a perturbèd cry,
The mighty watch-dog crossed the dial floor;
My heart beat as I stroked his shaggy head—
My heart throbbed as I stood beside the door.

In the sweet Christmas light that filled the porch,
As with a glory round a saint she stood,
Welcomes innumerable were on her lips,
And her cheeks reddened with tumultuous blood.
My own, my darling one, my life, my love,
That made the common ways of earth divine;
'Twas sweet to stand beneath the balmy roof,
Three fingers of thy gloveless hand in mine.

But dearer, sweeter, richer still to know
That thou wert mine, and that thy gentle heart,
Won by long sufferance—won in hope and doubt—
For me preserved a sanctuary apart;
Some sweet spot in a maiden's nature, where
Her thoughts flower loveliest with unconscious growth
The Eden of her soul where passion lives,
As if the guest to go or stay were loth.

In the old chairs before the household fire
We sat and gossiped; we had histories,
Dear nooks beside the winding river banks,
Dear names carved deep upon the cherry trees.
Old quarrels that the fresh love consecrates
As with some richer and diviner charm,
Old theories we wove as oft we went
Through the soft evening pastures, arm in arm

And oft I raised my head, when the tall urn
Bubbled between us, and I caught your eyes,
Dear, holy love, fixed sad upon my brows,
And full of dim, delicious mysteries;

Our hands upon the cloth one moment met,
A rough hand, and five fingers cool and white,
And the whole chamber vanished in the mist
Of an unknown and exquisite delight.

Do you remember how your father looked—
Stared me with pity, stared at me in wrath;
Well, he was old, and sorrowing shadows lie
On the thick hedges of a downward path.
He did not love me; I was strange to him;
His mind had measure of the ancient score;
He liked a man whom the king's herald knew
And nailed his pedigree above his door.

Those were poor times (you did not love me less)
And weary toil fetched slender recompense;
Silent and sad the grey past hung behind,
Before the future loomèd dark and dense.
I saw the sneer that writhèd on his lips,
And the white pallor of his feudal blood;
I rose, and stood, and trembled on the floor,
Passion, and love, and misery at feud.

And then I went, but when I reached the path,
Slid straight between the alder trees, I turned,
The moon looked yellowly across the downs,
The moon upon the broken dial mourned;
The moon looked full into your yearning face,
And touched the raven ripples of your hair;
But the old saint-like atmosphere was lost
To the fierce vision blended with despair.

Forgive me, oh, forgive me, patient one,
I blamed you for my sorrow and my shame;
Once—thrice I turned and stood to say good-bye,
But with the message wild reproaches came.

Out on the night, a-past the wicket step,
Out in the dark, disconsolate and poor,
Sad as the wind that, blown from the low hills,
Fainted in monodies from moor to moor.

II.

The year lay dying in the east,
The Christmas chimes had swung and ceast,
The Christmas light died at the feast.

Down looked the moon, but looked no more
Upon the silent river shore,
Or on the hilltops faint and hoar.

Down into London's struggling gloom,
Down on the city of the Doom,
A scarf of cloud around her bloom.

Below the bridge the black ships lay,
The thin lamps gleamed from quay to quay,
The thin masts trembled in the grey.

At times a voice was heard to cry
Some sudden warning; by-and-by
A swift plunge told its mystery.

And deep and grim the river went
Past arch, and tower, and monument,
As with a wail of discontent.

The clocks tolled two, and near and far
Rung in a fierce prophetic war,
The chimes roared back with brazen jar.

And as they ceased to clang and stir,
The foggy night grew silenter,
As nearer day the moments were.

Upon the bridge I stood alone,
Listening to the slow waves' moan,
Lapping the weedy buttress stone.

Friendless and homeless, 'twas to me
A sort of Christmas company
To watch the swirls glide to the sea ;

To see the starlight glimmer grim,
Across the currents vague and dim,
And wish that I could go with them.

I touched my breast and trembled—there—
'Twas chiller than the morning air—
Close lay a cherished lock of hair.

And then, dear heart, my eyes grew wet;
I saw, in vision desolate,
The hill—the house where first we met.

The sweet old landscapes that we knew,
When nights were fair and skies were blue,
And every wind in odour flew.

I said : "To-night, beside the hearth,
The light of the sweet household mirth;
Old days to her are little worth.

Or if they come they scarcely raise
A tear to dim her laughing gaze,
And glitter in the Christmas blaze.

Buried and dead am I to her;
The sighs of some new worshipper,
Make all her selfish pulses stir.

Some neat, new suitor, in disguise
Of hollow laughs and tempting lies,
And fine sense of proprieties."

Behind her chair I see him sit,
Filling her ear with borrowed wit,
Which she pronounces exquisite.

And the soft fingers and the palm,
That were to me earth's precious balm,
She gives him with untroubled calm.

And by-and-by, for his reward,
She rises to the harpsichord,
And crucifies my darling bard.

O, heartless havoc! when such ears
Suck in the whispers of the spheres,
Nor utter thoughts in silent tears!

O, shameless barter of a faith,
Sworn to exist unto her death:
Trifled away in one short breath!

I clenched my hands in bitter woe,
I felt my brain in tears could flow,
But my ill-angel answered—No!

The sun came up, the cloud went down,
And the sick daylight, dank and brown,
Struggled across the mighty town.

And I went—whither, ask me not—
Mine own, that morning is forgot;
Hidden in one blind mercy blot.

III.

'Twas summer time, the radiant world of June
Fell on the dreamful earth,
Within—'twas coolest shadow; the red broom
Lay piled upon the hearth.

Through the slim spaces in the lattice breadth
The sun sloped from the eaves ;
The very atmosphere waxed tremulous
With the green stir of leaves,

With airy whispers from the distant woods,
Around the moorland reach—
The whisper of the fainting lilac boughs,
The low voice of the beech.

The subtle melodies the hot gusts sucked
From the quaint woodland bridge,
That shone a perfect circle in the brook,
Beyond the last wold ridge.

And when the birds sang and the echoes blew,
And beat upon the blind,
That shook, a purple languor, in the sun,
And rose with the sweet wind,

Again for me the old world charm revived ;
It seemed as after death
One woke from sleep upon a fairer earth—
The dreamland of our faith.

Beside each other in the porch we sat,
The quaint old-fashioned place,
Built up of knotted boughs and peaked roofs,
And rich in country grace.

Between us and the roadway stretched the lawn ;
The wicket was not seen,
For the laburnums raised their slender trunks
And branching firs between.

Long on the grass the gable shadows stretched,
And then the chimneys threw
Their grim phantasmal shadows on the sward,
That dim and dimmer grew.

"At last, at last," I dare not see her face,
I dare not catch her eyes ;
But my heart yearned with a sudden pain,
My breath was choked in sighs.

"Can you love me ?" I asked, "Dear, answer me."
The purple curtain shook ;
I heard the ripple of sweet moans that mocked
The murmur of a brook,

Of a pure brook that glides in summer time,
Through fields and pleasant air,
Stealing the beauty of the golden moss
And lilies white and fair.

So it was all confest ; my own was mine,
And I in peace was blest ;
A tender hand upon my shoulder lay,
A face was on my breast.

And ere the holy lights of Christmas threw
Their glory on our life,
Under one roof, beside one household fire,
I sat beside my wife.

Dark grew the dial, but we little recked
How the sweet minutes ran ;
Or how the dusk was posting up the east,
A faint star caravan.

For we were happy though my love was sick—
Sick with protracted doubt
That digs the heart in sepulchres, and blows
The flame of patience out.

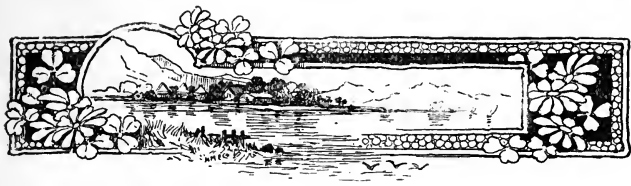
I had returned to her, and conquered much—
Conquered the goods of life ;
And dragged a conscience and a victor's spoil
Out of the seething strife.

I had returned to her. In the whole world
Else whither could I go ?
I knew the path as if my feet had left
Their prints within the snow.

And she—the light came back in her sick eyes,
The light of the rich past—
She caught my hand in silence and in tears,
And then she said, " At last."

Dear love, God's sweetest sweetness comes in woe,
His balm is given in pain ;
The Angel of the Promise wakes and smiles
Above the cloud and rain.





BY THE TURNSTILE.

THERE'S light in the west, o'er the rims of the
walnut,
Low croons the stream, in the meadows below,
Shrill sings the robin, a-top of the briar,
Black, through the golden dusk, darkens the crow.
O love, from the hamlet, that gleams in the shallows,
Come up through the pastures—come upwards and
smile,
That your dear face may shine twenty roods through the
twilight,
And sprinkle with starbeams the stones of the stile.
Come hither, come hither,
'Tis midsummer weather;
Airy-paced, violet-eyed, dainty-lipped lisper,
For into your pink ear, sweetheart, if you let me,
If but for a moment, I'd hurriedly whisper.
O daisies that glitter in long tangled grasses,
White wastes of delight that stream fair to the moon,
Unprison your lids, though the dank dew is falling,
And catch the sweet footsteps that hasten here soon.

There's a candle a-gleam in the grey cottage lattice,
There's a shadow that comes 'twixt the light and the
pane,
And a dear little head slily peers through the casement,
Turns backward, and leaves me the shadow again.
Come hither, come hither,
'Tis midsummer weather ;
The windmill has stopped, dear, ah ! that is our token,
For ere the night falls through yon great arch of planets,
One quick little word in your ear must be spoken.

There's an echo that comes from the dusk of the
paddock—

The echoes of feet that are tripping and walking,
There's a murmur that creeps through the heart of the
pasture,

O love, is it you, or the daisies, are talking ?
'Tis she, for the wild mint, scarce crushed by her footstep,
Gives out all its odour—that's all it can give her—
And the stile that I've sat by since six in the evening,
Turns round, ay it does, of itself to receive her.

Come hither, come hither,
'Tis midsummer weather ;
Now answer me this, by the round moon above me,
Do you ?—well, after all, what's the use of being talking ?
Sure you wouldn't come hither if you didn't love me ?





THE DEAD ROSE.

T WAS morning; through the eastern pane,
 Bloodshot with sunrise, came the sound
 Of intermingling wind and rain,
 From coign and buttress heaped around;
I stood once more on holy ground:
From floor to roof, from jamb to groin,
The wine-dark volumes round me rose;
 This was her cloister in the years
 Men mourn with heartaches, not with tears,
 And agonies of unreprieve.

The square, trim garden flashed outside,
 The hollyhocks against the sun;
The terrace, chestnut-arched and wide,
 With quickening shadows overrun.
Midway, a triton stooped, and spun
From his cold shell a film of gold—
 A pulsing, palpitating spray—
 And here my lady loved to be,
 Close by her friend, the damson tree,
 When rosied with the sinking day.

Sighing, I turned, and towards me drew
A volume from the littered heap :
Her eyes had searched it through and through,
And two white leaves were sealed to keep
A thought for one across the deep—
A dead rose skeletoned in dust
Which I had pulled twelve years ago !
And this, through all the tides of change—
This was my lady's worst revenge—
Her last kiss for the latest blow.

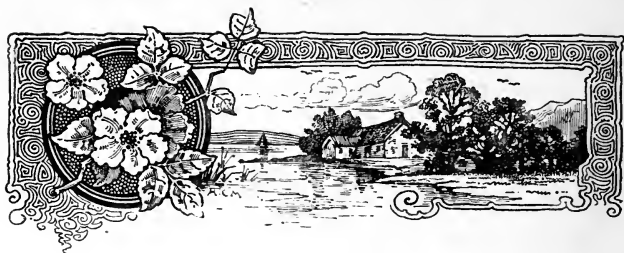
The air shook the mezereon,
And made a glamour down the hall ;
One mildewed banner swayed alone,
The rest hung huddled to the wall ;
I trembled, and remembered all :
The fountain leaped, the terrace gleamed,
And she was white, and I was wroth ;
Three words—reproaches—and I went,
Yet felt in my worst discontent
That white face shining down my path.

O slander, cherished till too late !
O sweet life, darkened in its prime !
O living impotence of hate,
Which scorns results of tide and clime,
And waxes with increasing time !
Yet she was wronged, my lady—wronged ;
I will not curse them—let them be,
For this poor relic's darling sake :
The ill they wrought, let God unmake,
And may His pity guardian me.

Good-bye ! The flower was at my heart,
The Tudor casements sank behind ;

On wings voluminous and swart,
A cloud came rushing up the wind,
And made the waves and beaches blind.
The lightnings lit the hissing surf—
One wrack of fire a moment still—
O flash and fade and flash in vain,
There was a lightning in my brain ;
There was a grave below the hill.





AT THE INN.

IN the black rafters overhead,
The log-wood firelight winked and gleamed;
Through the square window, thrice bull's-eyed,
The misty April moonlight streamed.
The dog lay coiled upon the hearth,
The cricket made all holiday,
And still blind Tom, the pedlar, sang,
With husky voice, his changeless lay:—
“Let others break their hearts for wealth,
And toss about on the ocean foam;
I love to live in the dear old land,
For 'tis better, my boys, to die at home.”

Around the house the wild wind blew,
And, on its hinges, shook the door,
The log spat fire, and three big sparks
Like coals glowed on the earthen floor.
Sudden the cock crowed high and long,
Chuckled the hens, a breath or two;
Down the broad chimney showered the soot;
But Tom sang, to his mission true:—

“Let others break their hearts for wealth,
And toss about on the ocean foam ;
I love to live in the dear old land,
For, ’tis better, my boys, to die at home.

A stir went creeping through the thatch,
The rafters groaned like things in pain,
The great blue bull’s-eyes ’gan to drip,
The moon went out, down came the rain.
The cricket stopped, the dog outstretched
Yawned in his torpor, then the bell
Tolled out ’twas midnight; on went Tom,
The ballad pleased his humour well:—
“Let others break their hearts for gold,
And toss about on the ocean foam ;
I love to live in the dear old land,
For ’tis better, my boys, to die at home.”

The guests climbed up the dusky stairs,
With closing eyes and stooping brows,
The thatch gave back the sound of rain,
And the storm whistled across the house.
Not a star could be seen outside,
Not a candle glimmered within;
But Tom went on in dark and storm,
To the shrill sound of his violin:—
“Let others break their hearts for gold,
And toss about on the ocean foam ;
I love to live in the dear old land,
For ’tis better, my boys, to die at home.”





M A Y.



OPEN, sweet flowers, your eyes,
Earth's awake,
Rain droppeth from the skies,
The songs of throstles rise,
In field and brake.
Come churchyard marigold,
Flower of the sun,
O pansies bloom,
O lilies break the fold,
Unbosom one by one,
And come !

Shy daisies of the mead,
Quick, be up,
And let your lids be red,
Round every yellow head,
And dew-charged cup.
Puce honeysuckles blow—
Blow in the grass;
Mint, from the gloom,
Breathe out your odorous woe,
As nymphs and shepherds pass,
And come !

Primroses, moist and pale,
Sun the hedge,
Spread sunshine down the vale,
Climb over park and pale.
The brooklets sedge
Is dark without your light.
Naiads do cry,
And bitterns boom,
Through all the grey daylight,
Till the sweet sun doth die,
Come, come !

May is upon the earth,
And above,
The swallow leaves the north,
Crickets sing on the hearth,
The world is love.
The furze is heaped with fire,
Whitethorns are gay,
Flowered is the broom,
The larks repair their choir.
For 'tis the month of May,
O come !





UNDER THE CHESTNUTS.

TELL us, O Cræsus, languid and weary,
Pacing the highway in purple and white,
Which doth thy crown or those cap and bells,
airy,

Sit upon brows that have more of the light?
We camp on the greensward, we roll in the meadow,
We sleep in the starlight, when laughter is done;
Choosing the prime of the shine and the shadow,
Down in the bypaths under the sun.

Winter with us is a season of splendour,
Logs crackle gaily on altar and hearth;
Then comes the spring, and a voice, low and tender,
Whispers "green leaves" in the ear of the earth.
Summer has babblings of vintages mellow,
Creaking of wine-presses sanguine and dun,
Chatter of harvest time, sheafy and yellow,
Down in the bypaths under the sun.

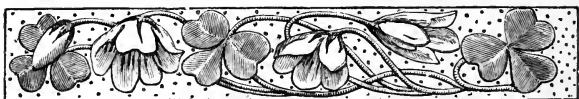
Look in our Rubric: the pages are olden!
Worshipping fingers the binding have rent.
What can corrupt the philosophy golden
Which seasons the worst with the salt of content?

O Cræsus, whilst smiles may be spare in your palace
 (Round the dial of riches the hours slowly run),
 Hark to the laughter that startles the valleys,
 Down in the bypaths under the sun.

Magnate and consul a moment come hither,
 Round by the bridge, o'er the dry torrent's bed,
 Sit on the wild thyme, and taste of the weather
 Shed from the olive trees branched overhead.
 Here's wine that has cobwebbed one hundred Decembers
 (Pan! what a vintage resides in that tun);
 And delicate kid, broiled on chestnuttty embers,
 Smokes in the bypaths under the sun.

Ha! there's a fig for your banquets and mumming,
 And temples that throb with the griefs of debauch,
 Whilst we suck the prunes where the sycamore, blooming,
 Trails round the meadow a shadowy watch.
 Yours be the state, and the galley-oar's labour;
 Ours let it be through the vineyards to run,
 Chasing the swallows with timbrel and tabor,
 Down in the bypaths under the sun.





GOD HELP HER.

["Jemima was not more than two months, I think, over six years old when she went out. She said: 'Mother, I want some boots to go to school'; so I sent her out, and saved up what she earned until it was time enough to get them. She was a corpse from going in the turnips. She came home from work one day, when about ten and a half years old, with dizziness, and her bones aching, and died, and was buried in little better than a fortnight."—*Evidence of a Mother before the Children's Employment Commission in reference to Agricultural Gangs.*]

I.



HEARD the fierce wail, incoherent,
Of one in her need—
Heard the cry of a heart too much broken
By torture to bleed.
For the red joyous blood had abandoned
The core where it leapt,
Ere the little child, grown to a woman,
Knew sorrow, and wept—
Knew sorrow, and with it bereavement,
The cot's narrow space
Framing round the ghast ruin of childhood,
Stiff limbs, pallid face;

The mouth shrivelled up, and half open,
The hair's ebon stream;
Lids drooping their night-waves of lashes
Like one in a dream.
Ay, a dream that will perish, dissolving,
When, out from the skies,
The trump of the summoning angel
Bids earth to arise,
When the sepulchre feels, in its bowels,
The stir of the Dead,
When the flesh shall no more be a burthen,
When time shall be fled;
Then the trance of the child shall be over,
For heaven shall break,
That God may pass through the partition
For righteousness' sake.
Lift the little thing out of her ashes
(No longer wind-blown)—
And hers shall be guerdon eternal—
The palm and the throne.
Who slew her, who strangled God's darling?
Stand forth you accursed,
Stand forth in your villainous splendour,
The last shall be first.

II.

Six years—only six!—yet she laboured
In silence and pain,
Bore the blaze of the dizzying sunshine,
The brunt of the rain.
Reeling feet trod the sharp, biting stubble,
Ay, trod till they bled,
And her hands, as they fought with the thistles,
As poppies were red.

Toiling hard without tear, without murmur,
The little thing went,
Till her brain in the struggle grew weary,
Her courage was spent.
Christ died, in His pity to save her,
The slave of the Mart,
Where conscience is ruled by the Mammon,
The absence of heart;
But man marred the gracious redemption,
He wanted a slave,
A thing to pick stones from the pasture,
And waste to the grave.
So scorning, denying the mission
Of Him who laid down
Life and love on the hill that looks over
The perishing town,
That quaked at the footsteps of Herod,
A child, yea, a child
Was chased like a beast by the hunter
From home to the wild.
From the sweetness of kisses, embraces,
The nameless drew grace,
The light and the peace of the household,
Where, face meeting face,
Create the pure intercommunion
Which the world cannot give—
Create that most precious assurance :
'Tis something to live.

III.

'Tis come, the supreme consummation,
The Merciful Death
Just stood at the desolate bedside;
Said "Hush" to her breath.

How quiet she lies in the coffin !
 How thin her hair's gold !
 She looks—she was ten years last birthday—
 Full twenty years old.
 Starved, haggard, and stiff with expression,
 Her corpse is a text
 Of this world's unreasoning vengeance,
 The wrath of the next.
 Caps off, here's my lord, the gang-master,
 Arm in arm with his bride,
 Mark, she leans on the chest of the monster,
 Her eyes glow with pride.
 I knew him, the true British face—
 Nose and forehead in line,
 The eyes, in profile, drawn obliquely—
 The squint of the swine.
 And my lady, how bravely she bears it !
 I knew her well, too,
 Knew her and her rancid complexion,
 Her eyes' bilious blue.
 No word for the poor squalid darling
 Who lies in the gloom
 Of the casement, all patches and bull's-eyes,
 Of this wretched room.
 "She's dead—ah, I thought so ; no matter."
 And did he dare speak ?
 And what was that feminine titter,
 The possible freak
 Of a woman who humoured her mate
 With unwomanly art,
 Affronting her God and her conscience,
 Belying her heart ?
 Lord, watch how she smothers her laughter,
 And wears the demure ;

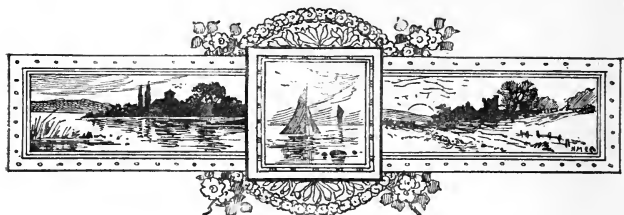
And the ruby that burns at her throat
Is the blood of the poor!
Weep, woman, in agonised silence,
'Till tears make you blind;
Till they look on your voiceless bereavement,
And call you resigned.
The coffin, the shroud of the pauper,
The spiritless clay,
Are dues for the voice, the embrace
That should comfort to-day.
Yes, here in the heart of "Free England"
The Murder was done—
The slow loathsome murder of System
That rots in the sun.
Not the bloodshed of fair open strife,
Foot to foot, blow for blow;
When a man cleaves his enemy's forehead,
And stamps down a foe.
Not this; but unholy conspirings,
By legalised arts,
To age the fair tresses of childhood,
To break little hearts.
Ah! cowards, ah! worse than assassins,
The day shall yet come
When the face of that blue, wasted victim
A seraph's shall bloom.
When she, and you too, in the Presence
Of Judgment shall stand;
If there be a Providence watching,
I know at which hand.

IV.

As one sometimes hears the dull crackle
In dusks of the crypt,

As the searcher unfolds from the read-stane
 The pale manuscript,
Slants it lightwards a little and sees it,
 The lamp shining on,
Then flies satisfied with his treasure
 Right out to the sun :
So I hear the Angel of Record,
 He turns the thick leaves,
The Book of Accompt whose fierce pages
 Are read as oat sheaves.





ALICE'S KEEPSAKE.

THE linnet swung high on the gold laburnum,
That tender, beautiful morn;
The shrill lark twinkled on pulsing pinions
O'er leagues of yellowing corn.

The river ran cool through violet hazes,
By forest and gleaming pass;
And the lowing of herds came slowly windward,
From meadows knee-deep in grass.

Then slow through the jewelly, radiant weather,
By bow'ry hollow and nook,
I went with the fugitive July shadows,
To sit by the singing brook.

O brook, what meaneth that crystal babble,
That chatters of purple hills—
Of upland breezes that shake the heather,
And dance with the daffodils?

There is a glittering mystic cypher
In all you utter and say,
As down through the hearts of the branchy woodlands,
You sparkle from day to day.

You will not tell it, you will not speak it;
But I shall know it aright;
I pluck this lily—the shielded secret
Is hid in its bosom white.

And she whom I love shall yet reveal it
With her pure heart's innocent lore;
Shall break the blossom, and read the cypher
That's writ on its amber core.

Onward the brook ; and I returning,
Through many an ocean gloom,
Saw the grey day break, fired with crimson,
Shine through the mists of home.

I heard the moan of the inland poplars,
The whirring of windmill sails,
The murmurous echoes that troop at daylight
From pastoral fields and vales.

Day fled, and I stood on our darkened threshold
The pilgrim of many a land,
My arms flung wide for our gold-haired Alice,
The lily within my hand.

She did not rise, and she did not answer,
Her palms were crossed on her breast;
For the angel of God had stilled her breathing,
And a silent saint was our guest.

But I placed the flower in her waxen fingers,
And whispered, "My beautiful love,
Bring this with thee when our souls encounter
At the gates of the city above."



THE MANSE.

THE Manse, with thirteen brick-red gables,
Quaintly hooded with sandstone dark,
With ivied stacks of crumbling chimneys,
Stands on the skirts of St Cyril's park:
The diamond casements are green and shattered,
The mullions mellow and grey with rime,
And even the vine on the porch has rotted
In the frosts and rains of forgotten time.

All round the silent, pathless gardens
The red fruits drop in the summer hours;
And the wind blown out of the roofless arbours
Is faint with the breath of the levelled flowers.
High on the terrace, woodbine muffled,
With blossoms the Greek urns overflow;
And the swallows nest in the shattered statues
That bend by the fountains, far below.

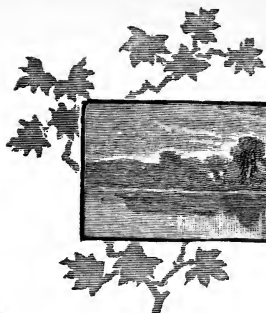
Stained and broken, the dusky arras
Like twilight hangs in the voiceless rooms;
And the misty cirques of the fractured skylights
Teem with imperfect lights and glooms.

All day, the sunlight, in dusty splendour,
Inward slants on the oaken floors;
All night, the moon, with a mournful glory,
Floats through the echoing corridors.

Many a time, in the precious seasons,
Hidden behind the veils of fate,
A young wife smiled from the diamond lattice,
And children laughed at the jasmined gate :
Tender affections, fond endearments,
Brightened the life of the happy throng;
The day was buried with prayers and laughter,
The nights were epics of peaceful song.

No more : the richly-blossomed trailer
Garlands the round of the channelled eaves;
The dial glows in the crimson briar,
The linnet sings in the privet leaves :
The white rose blows in the tangled hedges,
The laurels gleam by the garden door;
But they, the gracious and gentle-hearted,
Walk in that ancient Manse no more.





THE PICTURE.



HAT is my love like? She is fair,
Fair as a lovely autumn star,
Twinkling through the woodland air.

A cloven cherry is her mouth,
Her breath a breeze that wanders far,
Through hills of camphire in the south.

A milky shoulder, gleaming shy,
Peeps, silver-blanced, above her gown,
As from a fragrant nunnery.

O wondrous, wondrous is her hair!
A braided wealth of golden brown,
That drops on neck and temples bare.

Her hand so oft doth kiss her lips
That half the damask blood has flown
To ruby her fine finger tips.

I will not swear me for her eyes,
For when we meet my lids are prone—
Supine before their witcheries

She hath a voice like a slow brook
That crystals over sands of gold,
And sings in every flowery nook.

And her blithe laugh is soft and low,
And rich in meanings manifold—
A viol that the spring gusts blow.

Her beauty grows from hour to hour,
I meet her face in gloomy ways—
I meet the sunbeam with the shower.

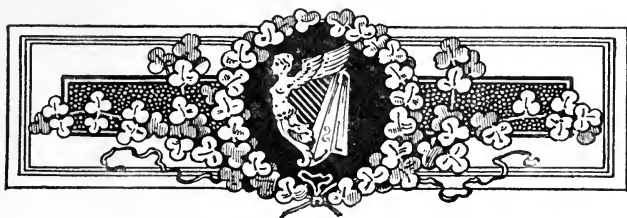
A glory shines before my gaze,
And dreaming, wide-awake, I go
Through long, long years of radiant days.





POEMS RELATING TO IRELAND.





A VISION.



SAW one, pale and stricken, by the sea,
Where the tide laps the crags, and cloudy stars,
Rising and falling through the endless night,
Light the black beaches and the sandy bars.

Around her mournful brows were interlaced
Garlands of rosemary and shamrock leaves,
And on her cheek the wan bloom lurked that falls
From moonless heavens upon autumn eyes.

So sad, so sweet! The passion of all time,
The heritage of conquered race to race,
Immortal grief, intensified despair,
Sat in her closed eyes and drooping face.

Yet beautiful withal—the mystic charm—
The sense of loveliness unspeakable—
That wrapt her as the grey mist wraps the morn,
Breathed from the Paradise from which she fell.

And, leaning on a broken harp, whose strings
Answered with discords to the ocean wind,
She sat—the hopeless future spread before,
The rayless ages thronging thick behind!

For, with the echoes of the caverns, came
The full-voiced generations of the past:
Prophet, and Priest, and Seer, and Warrior,
The field's bright ensign, and the galley's mast.

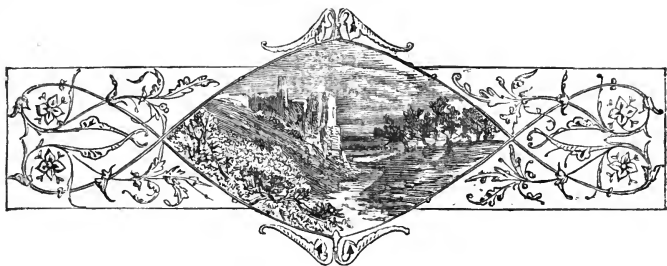
And there were cries of triumph on the shore,
And shouts of fighting men upon the brine,
And thund'rous pæans from exulting hosts,
Wafted round beakers beaded with red wine;

Which died away in sullen glooms and calms,
In whose great hearts the voice of tumult woke—
Clashing of hostile swords and ringing shields,
And banners reeling in the battle smoke.

Lo! as I gazed there came the sound of prayer,
And peelings of sweet bells, for conflict ceast;
The blackened beach blushed roses to the mere,
The fair sun topped the vapours of the east.

And listening for the dewy note of morn,
From the four corners of the breaking skies,
I heard the voice of prophecy exclaim—
“God's faithful one, thy griefs are past—Arise.”





THE MOUNTAIN PASS.



SIX-AND-THIRTY fighting men
Gathered in the mountain pass :
Blazed the camp-fire cheerily,
Twinkled all the dewy grass
Sword and carbine, pike and staff,
On the heather bloom were laid
From beneath some sun-browned coat
Shot and flashed another blade.
Six-and-thirty fighting men !
Oh, the days go merrilie !
All the stars rise right and left :
Ireland shall be free !



There's Michael of the mountain, stout,
There's William of the hazel glen,
There's Peter of the broad bull's chest—
Three gallant, fighting, warring men.

And there's our chief—a tower of might,
 A castle on the mountain crags—
 His eye is sharp as eagle's eye,
 His feet are fleetier than the stag's.
 Six-and-thirty fighting men !
 Oh, the wars go merrilie !
 All the stars rise right and left ;
 Ireland shall be free !

Essex comes from south, they say ;
 Let him come, we'll measure swords ;
 We, the outposts of the land,
 Keep no faith in empty words.
 We, the outposts of the land,
 Swear by heaven, our sovereign might,
 Not to shame O'Donnell's flag,
 Nor forego the nation's right.
 Six-and-thirty fighting men !
 May the war come merrilie !
 All the stars rise right and left ;
 Ireland shall be free !

Whilst O'Neill with shout and gun
 Thunders through the stubborn north ;
 Whilst the Saxons, east and west,
 Drench with blood both field and hearth ;
 Whilst the foe in England plots,
 Whilst the foe at home deceives,
 Whet the sword and light the fire—
 Curst be he who misbelieves.
 Six-and-thirty fighting men !
 Oh, may war come merrilie !
 All the stars rise right and left ;
 Ireland shall be free !

What's the news they bring to-day ?
England's queen is stark and dead ;
Tudor of the Tudors base,
May the black pit be her bed !
Ah, before her massive strength,
Cecil's cunning, craft, and lies,
All the chieftains of the north
Broke their heart's supreme emprise.
Six-and-thirty fighting men !
War will yet go merrilie !
All the stars rise right and left ;
Ireland shall be free !

Spanish ships are on the main ;
Plunder loads each choking hold,
Flag and pennon reel in silk,
Keel and stern are wrought of gold.
And a banner blest at Rome,
Floats above the high masthead—
Half of it is red and green—
Half of it is green and red.
Six-and-thirty fighting men !
War we'll wage right merrilie !
All the stars rise right and left ;
Ireland shall be free !

Mike M'Gee, your trusty pike
Is rusting with the hurtling rain ;
And the filly smells the wind,
Thick with garbage from the plain.
Tell her that the corn is nigh,
Oats in bushels, wheat in stacks,
Grass that shines as shamrocks shine
All along the mountain tracks.

Six-and-thirty fighting men !
Oh, the war comes merrilie !
All the stars rise right and left ;
Ireland shall be free !

Look ! That flash along the east !
Morning to you, Mistress Moon !
Hoo ! There sounds the warning gun,
God be thanked it came so soon.
Boys, there's battle in the wind ;
There it goes, the roaring drum ;
If I'm not rejoiced to-day
May the good God strike me dumb !
Six-and-thirty fighting men !
Oh, the war comes merrilie !
All the stars rise right and left
Ireland shall be free !





THE FOUR MASTERS.



HERE sleep the Four? What blessed earth—
What aisles, with burning windows, hold,
In porphyry, or red rough gold,
The sages of the South and North?
Where rest the men who whilst this Isle
Was barred with black Oppression's cloud,
Faced death and dungeons with a smile,
Nor held their heads less straight and proud?
They crept to peace in far Louvain,
Shrouded in the Franciscan grain;
Caring no more to greet the sun,
The hand's work and the heart's work done.

Beside the sea of Donegal—
The coasts beloved of Gaul and Spain—
From sunrise to the sunset's wane,
Their shadows dropped from wall to wall
Through years of change. Few watched their toil,
And fewer still the glory prized
Of saving from a trampled spoil
The truths a warring world despised:
There in that narrow little room,
Our martyrs' palms took fresher bloom,

And o'er those rudely sanded floors
Moved poets, kings, and warriors.

What visions must have lit their brains !
What splendours rolled apart their eyes
As gradually they saw arise
The bright thrones, the majestic reigns !—
As, statue-like, beneath their hands
The living, breathing Erin grew,
And smiled upon the fruitful lands
Of corn, and oil, and wine, and dew.
At their swift touch the prophets spoke,
The bards to strains of triumph woke,
Kings led the hosted worshippers,
And queens sang from their sepulchres.

Or, nearer down the tides of Time,
When the austere, grey pillar tow'rs
Which dial the incessant hours
Merged into mystery sublime ;
The pageant of our story sweeps
Through dolours and through days of light ;
The fleets contend upon the deeps—
The shores with wrestling steel are bright :
The graves are dug within the sand,
The salt surf rusts the broken brand,
And, in the hush, the women's cries
Rise sharp and frantic to the skies.

Weirdly they tell of Ireland's loss
When her great chiefs were forced to fly,
And, underneath an alien sky,
Exchange the falchion for the Cross.
Their hands are firm—their eyes are wet ;
They think of Donegal the lone,

In sapphires of the ocean set—

The crags and castles of Tyrone.
 Never again their chiefs shall tread
 The plains which foreign fraud made red ;
 But the true FOUR will write their fame
 In words that burn like living flame.

O fortitude that beat down Fate !

O Faith whose fount was ever clear !

O love which sorrow made more dear !

O toil that took no toll of date !

Rare, ardent spirits, but for ye

Our nation had no glorious page—
 No beam of immortality

To bridge the severed age and age.
 And ye—the foul world knew ye not !—
 Resigned and gracious, blessed the cot
 Within whose walls, 'mid storm and strife,
 Our Island's story leaped to life.

O friends, forgotten (if ye were),

The dawn of preparation nears :

Your vigils, blessed with prayers and tears,
 Were passed in no ungrateful air.

The gallant, kindly Irish race

Decrees the Cross ye bore shall bear,
 On Donegal's wind-beaten base,

The names which love made sweet and fair.*

Long may that Cross's Celtic crest
 Tower o'er the waters of the west,
 And symbolise on that grey shore
 The glory of the Faithful FOUR.

* At the time when this poem was written, 1873, it was proposed to erect a Celtic Cross to the memory of the Four Masters on the coast of Donegal, near the scene of their labours. The Cross was, however, afterwards erected in Dublin.



OSSIAN.



POKE my heart in the dearth of the night, of the
evil, the terrible night :

What boots it to thee, O descendant of poets,
and sages, and kings,

That thou wearest a garment fine-threaded with issues
of blackness and light—

That in courts thy harp rings ?

Thou hast seen all the glamour of Tara, the musters of
shield-covered men,

The fires, the rejoicings, the tumults, the trophies, the
long spoils of Meath—

Hast seen the processions march sunward—the flame of
their spears on the plain ;

Yet their guerdon was Death !

To death have gone down the pale victors—the bearers
of sparth-given scars ;

They sleep coldly, mutely, for ever, the cromlechs their
silent abodes ;

Where be they ? Ah, vainly I question the mutable eyes
of the stars,

And the shrines of the Gods.

There are pastures full fat in the heavens; red deer that
are swift as the cloud,
When rolls from Hy-Brasil the tempest, and, inland,
the forests grow dim;
There are women delightful and fragrant, by sunshines
of saffron o'erbowed—

Yet who has seen them?

I lost my next brother in battle, and dying he swore on
his knee:—

“If there be This an Hereafter, by Bel, hear my oath
loud and deep:

From ashes, and carcase, and cromlech, my spirit shall
stand before thee,

Be thou 'wake or asleep.”

O vigils with tear-stains made noisome! O famished,
inveterate years!

I've watched till mine eyes sucked in darkness, and
shrank at approaching of flame;

From winter, till over the shoulder of Hesper the green
time appears,

But never he came!

Where be he? The void has his atoms; dispersed, he's
dispersed by the wind

Made mad by the rank excitations of lightning, and
thunder, and sea;

He rolls round the world, an existence of particles shape-
less and blind;

Yet the dust is not he!

For ashes and death both are solvents—the meeting of
flail and of chaff,

That sets the red wheat in the corn-ear from husk and
entanglement free;

But the grain hath not conscience or sentience; it
weépeth not, nor doth it laugh—
Yet who laughed as he?

'Twill come—I must follow him surely; his night shall
be part of my night,
His action a part of my action, his doom shall be part
of my doom;
Copartners in misery, blindness through myriad epochs
of blight,
We must grope through the gloom.

Towards what? Ah, the mystery grieves me. Towards
what? and towards what? and towards what?
If Heavens or Hells or the Voids held but ultimate
hope of release
From uttermost midnight, I'd choose that my name and
my songs be forgot,
If we only felt peace.

I've rhymed to the chieftains and sages; at councils and
camp-fires I've sung,
Or, heated with mead, flung my hands where the moon
in the skies stood at bay
Of the blood-boltered brands of the sun; in the Gods'
ear my psalters have rung,
But no answer made they.

The swift, sharp rejoicings of life, and its gladsome
contentions are dead;
I lean as a pine thunder-rift on the sands of a wave-
channelled shore,
The salts and the breathings of brine make its trunk
fearful orange and red:
But for bloom! Nevermore.

At midnight the grey curtain shakes; deep at midnight
 a hand parts its fold,
 And a stark, cold Intelligence looks with a stare of
 request in my face,
 That face is as old as a million of ages a million times
 told—

'Tis the Spectre of Space.

The world knows me not, and I know not the world
 that perhaps may know me—

A Thing undefinable, ghostly, a Thing void of
 meaning or date.

Soul be calm : there's a flame on the land, and a voice on
 the crests of the sea,

Say to Patrick, I wait.





THE WICKLOW SEPTS.

THIS is the pleasant land of Feagh MacHugh—
Green valleys threaded by melodious rills—
Heaven upon heaven of the tearful blue
That steeps and overlaps our Irish hills;
Here rolled the tide of war in hurtling days,
Here reeled the standards, and dispersed the hosts—
Each peak and promontory red ablaze
With signals answering to the storm-vexed coasts;
And here St Michael's Chapel, reared by him *
Whose heart is bound to Ireland and to God,
Looks o'er the teeming pastures, clear or dim—
The Crosses on its porches fair and broad.
Around him burns the blood of Feagh MacHugh—
The ever valiant, ever faithful Race,
Who've kept the Lamp of Life refreshed anew
Through all vicissitudes of time and place;
And in the shadow of that Church there be
The Convent where the sweet-voiced Sisters pray—
Angels of Mercy and of Charity,
Whose lives are one angelic holiday.

* Rev. Richard Galvin, P.P., Rathdrum.

Peace unto him and them who bless the land—
The gallant fighting land of Feagh MacHugh:
The clime that held aloft the smiting hand
Whilst Ireland to herself was leal and true.

O'Donnell, breaking heart and hope in Rome—
Was ever brighter, nobler spirit bent?—
Thirsting once more to see the blessed home
'Mid immemorial woods and castles pent,
Calls to his side, this solemn August day,
His grey-haired poet: "You shall sing for me,
Dear bard, one heartfelt, long-resounding lay
Of Wicklow, guardian of the land and sea."

The pale light lessens, as, with folded hands—
Eyes fixed upon the Crucifix—he tells
Of horrent conflict of the warring bands,—
The storms that swept and crimsoned Wicklow's dells
"Write on, write on; when we shall be no more—
Heaped ashes in the red sepulchral urn—
Some brave heart Ireland's fortunes shall deplore,
And for our fate five million hearts shall mourn."

O'DONNELL'S CHRONICLE.

WHEN bursting cloud and howling wind
High up in heaven made discontent,
Along the streets, for tempest blind,
My solitary way I bent:
With me one gallant spirit went—
O'Hagan—be he quick or dead,
I pray the saints may call him heir—
Ten thousand blessings on his head,
And on his clustered yellow hair.

For long 'twixt dungeon walls I lay,
Immured in Dublin's massy keep;
I had no sense of night or day—
No lucent hour—the boon of sleep—
I am a man, and do not weep.
And on this night when earth was still—
Save for the conflicts of the stars—
A faint light fell upon the sill,
And some hand rent my prison bars.

I was abroad! The liberal air
Danced to the motions of my blood!
'Twas freedom! freedom! everywhere,
On spinning vane and streaming flood.
A welcome came from hill and wood.
I felt the tameless, blessed wind
Pelt frozen roses on my cheek,
And—'tis the frenzy of our kind—
I only thought—I could not speak!

Then, piloted across the night,
And from the haunts of savage men—
Up mountain slopes with snow-drifts white,
Apast the beasts' and robbers' den,
I reached at last that lonely glen,
Where reigned the Prince of Green Fertire,
Who rendered God and man his due—
A spirit wrought of purest fire—
The gallant, valiant Feagh MacHugh.

He sheltered me—he honoured me:
I broke his bread—I drank his wine;
I sat beneath his crowning tree,
And heard the streams innumerable pine
Down verdurous gorge and dark decline.

Ten thousand cattle graced his fields,
His allies claimed two hundred horse;
Friends owned his lances and his shields—
His foemen owned his blows and curse.

And whilst his mountain banner flew
Amongst those broken slopes and peaks,
Where Nature blooms in form and hue,
Through fifty million myriad freaks;
A liar is his name who speaks
Of Fighting Hugh as one who knelt
A suppliant at Saxon knee:
With skean in hand, or knife in belt,
He wrought to see his country free.

Hear it, O Russell, from the rock
That frowns above the stern defile!
Hear it, whilst eddies shock to shock,
Down the grim valley, mile on mile;
O faithless Saxon, pause and smile
Whilst surge along the tides of war:
The swift attack—the close—the rout—
The broken plume, the trampled star—
The conquered's cry—the victor's shout.

Audley, Carew, and Cosby fell—
Saw the last glimpse of heaven, Ben Dhu,
As the awakened shout and yell
Thy naked dells rang through and through.
O'Tooles, Fitzgeralds—ever true—
Dealt that sharp blow for Ireland's sake;
And we shall deal that blow again,
Though every leaf in bush and brake
Should leap to life as Englishmen.

The hope—the trust—the courage steeled
In fires and storms—to bear the faith,
Are proof that Ireland will not yield,
But with unalterable breath,
Carry the Old Flag down to death.
They shall not slay thee—O my Queen !
Whom knaves and tyrants would debase,
Thou yet shalt lift thy head serene,
Above a glorious, ransomed Race.

In Glenmalure the Saxons lie—
They sleep between the ferns and stones—
Let him who nurses enmity
Descend the wild, and count their bones,
Whilst the north storm at midnight groans.
Cry out our triumph, Avonmore—
Rehearse the day thy waves ran red,
And the tall rushes on thy shore
Were heaped with trophies of the dead.

What need to curse the ruffian hand
That slew MacHugh—dear, gallant chief ?
His sons shall yet possess his land,
God's hand shall heal his people's grief :
Their day of dole be light and brief :
The cause he battled for is lost !
No ! Ireland never shall stoop down,
Despite the heaviest, reddest cost ;
Or rend her robe, or break her Crown.

In London town they say the Cause
Is crushed, is vanquished ! God above
Shall we submit to ruffian laws,
That strive to quench our faith and love ?
Dear as the message from the dove

That winged storm-crossed from out the Ark—
The green leaf cloven in its bill—
Comes the sweet message, bright or dark,
From Irish plain and Irish hill—

What, we the men whose blood is fire—
Whose bones o'ercast the open earth—
Devoted mother—gallant sire—
The children of the shrine and hearth—
Shall we pass down amid the mirth
Of those barbarians? God is good—
If sometimes His Apostle faints—
And He will guard through time and flood,
The pillared Island of the Saints.

Write down that hope in letters red—
Red with my heart's sharp misery—
Red with the wrath that wrings my head—
Red with my soul's last agony;
However men may waste or die,
The Great Lord keeps a better time,
And when before Him I shall stand,
I'll say, in Ossian's flowing rhyme :—
"My God, I've died for Ireland!"

Shall hope—shall courage not renew,
Whilst some hand, howsoever weak,
Plucks up the banner of MacHugh,
And hurls its lights from peak to peak?
Shall not true men spring up to speak
The story of our Ireland's wrongs—
My holy Ireland, dim for tears—
Whom poets consecrate in songs
That are the music of the years?

Courage ; the Fifteen wars are o'er—
Shall I survive to fight again ?
Ah, never, never, nevermore,
I and my saffron-shirted men,
Shall hurl red war through gorge and glen.
The Saints about me move all night,
With covered chalices of gold:
Their hair is fair—their raiment white—
And I am prematurely old.

Die ! And to die so far from where
The wild Atlantic laps the coast—
Far from O'Byrne's nine-guarded lair,
And from O'Toole's unvanquished host :
I had my youth, and used to boast,
And never feared the slow decay
That saps the issues of my brain ;
But in the saint's unclouded day
I shall renew that youth again !

This is the pleasant land of Feagh MacHugh,
The paradise of valley, plain, and mist—
Land where the violets, in morning's dew,
Are mingled jacinth and pale amethyst.
And one beside me moves—the dearest heart *
That ever throbbed unto our Irish air ;
The evening darkens redly—we must part :
Close on the sea, the hills are sharp and bare,
And winged with tempest ; half the sky is blue
And fresh with tender starlight. O good-bye !
Green oasis in one man's memory—
Dear land of gallant, valiant Feagh MacHugh !

* Rev. C. P. Meehan.



HOME SICK.

SLOW fell the night, a starless mystery ;
The wasting moon, in vapours glorified,
Dropped intermittent splendours on the tide,
On the far-flashing roller, and on me.
And there was aching at my heart; I knew
From that dumb pain of parting no surcease,
As the dark ship, with slowly-slanting masts,
Clave the resisting surges of the seas.

Child of her children, I had learned to love
Dear Ireland, and her quiet pastoral charm,
The rain-cloud hovering over field and farm,
The broad bright mead, the shadow-changing grove:
Nor less the busy tumult of her streets,
When, as the sunset, through her commerce rolled,
The mists half-poised above the city roofs
Blazed into burning citadels of gold.

Often, at twilight through the white-massed sails,
From the tall bridges had I strained mine eyes,
Longing that I, to other lands and skies,
Might follow them, as followed the swift gales.

Ah me ! the dream had changed to barren fact,
Deep in the eastern darkness Ireland lay,
The light that lingered on her shores last night
Would be forerunner of our coming day.

If the wan wave made substance to our feet,
Soon I and mine had trod that reeling floor,
Yea, wandered fugitive from shore to shore,
Back, back to home with pilgrim paces fleet.
Hoarse soughed the surge beneath the sliding keel,
And greyly rose the roller's shattered crest,
Whilst, struggling through the shaken element,
The great ship heaved and battled toward the west

Then an unutterable sense of pain
Shot through my heart, and startled all my blood,
Unpitied 'mid the rounding dark I stood,
That nameless sorrow mastering my brain.
I wrestled with the agony; and then,
As came, of old, the angel to the strife,
Pressing my little daughter to her breast,
Beside me, on the wild deck, stood my wife.

And back to its allegiance came my thought
With fainting steps, and purposes most dim,
'Twas exile, but 'twas exile still for them,
Sorrow and ill, yet sorrow sweetly wrought.
I leant my head a moment on her neck,
A voice cried truce to the subsiding war.
And when again I looked up to the clouds,
Lo ! the clear radiance of the morning star !





THE RETURN.



NCE more the red familiar streets
Are round me; and the Irish sky,
Filled with its myriad cloudy feats,
Bends deep above. The sea is nigh:

I fancy that its music comes
Between the triply-breasted ships,
Where Dublin quay clasps close the tide,
Palace and hovel reared beside,
And the salt wind upon my lips.

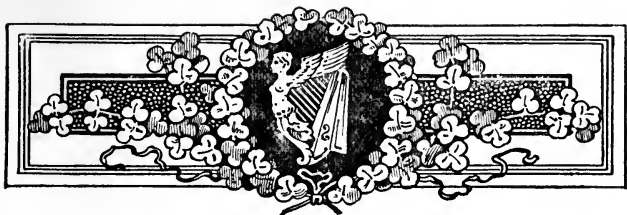
Dear City of the days long dead,
Whose hopeless Hope o'erlooks the seas,
Thy very life with Death is wed—
Where are thy dazzling pageantries?
Where is the pride that nerved thee once—
The glory of secure renown?
Thou seated here, provincialised,
Beggared and utterly despised—
Queen with rent robe and shattered crown.

The beauty of the sunrise smites,
 With fire of heaven, thy temple walls;
The splendour of the sunset lights
 The pillared porches of thy halls;
Glory, and grace, and colour fill
 Thy measure to its wide extent;
 But thou art torpid as the kings
 Who sleep in the imprisoning rings,
 That make their grave and monument.

What man could know and love thee not,
 Even in the garments of thy shame—
Even in thy bitter, bitter lot—
 Thou stainless lady, free from blame?
Thy very pavements ring with song,
 For there the Irish heart took voice—
 There struck the high heroic chord—
 There uttered the inspiring word
 That bade the Celtic world rejoice.

If ashes be thy meed to-day,
 The Crown awaits thee with the Cross,
And heaven, that is thy hope and stay,
 Keeps record of each tear and loss.
The nations totter in the dust,
 Their might, their power, as shadows flee,
 But thou keep'st in those earnest eyes,
 Blue as thy radiant, sapphire skies,
 The Springtide of Eternity.





SAINT MALACHY.

CLAIRVAUX, FEAST OF ALL SOULS, 1148.



SILENT and grey, against grey skies,
The monastery gables loom,
The yellow sunset flares and dies,
The lamp burns redder in the room.
By that red lamp Saint Bernard stands,
And bends o'er Malachy supine,
Stretched on the ash, before the shrine,
With moving lips and folded hands.
His toilsome pilgrimage is o'er
And here he faints, from Ireland far,
Far from Beg-erin's haunted shore,
The ivied cavern of Imar.

A wind blows up the mountain steep,
The hail beats roughly on the grate,
The cowlèd monks throng round and weep,
Or pray with sobs importunate.

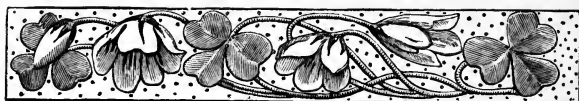
He hears nor wind, nor rain, nor sigh,
His heart is in the bleeding side
Of Him, the Loved, the Crucified,
And burns to share His agony.
Alas ! no martyr's palm is his—
Not his to tread the fiery share,
For heaven unfolds bliss after bliss,
And there are angels in the air.

Ah, many eyes, too soon, shall rain
Hot tears through Ireland's sea-girt bound;
Armagh shall mourn in ashen grain,
And Ibrac wail, through all its round.
In Benchor's choir, the joyful song
Will sink into lamenting strain,
Never his monks shall see again
Their father "beautiful and strong."
Let Cormac weep upon his throne,
And yet exult, for he whose deed
Gave him the crowning chair of stone,
In heaven for him and his shall plead.

"*Into Thy hands,*"—his voice is low,
But yet distinct amid the storm :
"*Lord Jesus.*" How his fixed eyes glow,
Whilst gazing on Christ's bleeding form !
Above, the bells of midnight toll
With sullen clangour; as they cease,
Comes like a message fraught with peace,
The organ's penitential roll.
Speed, steadfast soul ; the fight is done;
The heavens are cloven for thy flight,
And, piercing myriad depths of sun,
Plunge into God's excessive light.

Morning : and as St Bernard turns
 From the white altar, dimly seen,
 A spirit shape before him burns—
 Uplifted wings with eyes between.
 'Tis Malachy ! He vanishes ;
 A sudden perfume fills the place—
 The perfume of the mystic grace
 Of heaven's adoring sanctities.
 The grave is dug—the chaunt is loud—
 And calmly in his last abode,
 The brown Cistercian robe for shroud,
 Sleeps “Malachy, the friend of God.”





EXILES.

GREY, wrinkled wanderers, on shores remote,
And lands forlorn, where the swallow's wing
Drops on the skirts of summer ; and the throat
Of the green linnet bubbleth not to spring ;
Brown toilers, fugitives from fairer skies,
The star-vaults of the meeting west and north ;
Inheritors of mournful histories,
Whose sweat has colonised the teeming earth ;
Rare women, beautiful and sad and chaste—
As twilight dews upon your native heaths,
What time the April blows with rainy haste,
And the swart cowslip in the hedges breathes ;
From many lands, from myriad willow glooms,
From the cold rivers of captivity—
From monuments, from households, and from tombs,
Your faint, sweet voices float across the sea.
I hear them—not in many broken wails,
But in one wild funereal orison
Gathered, as a hundred separate sails
Mass to a single snow-cloud in the sun.

I hear them rising like a choral woe,
 Rolled along battlefields beside the main—
A breathing misery, chaunted loud and low,
 From the great torture of a people's brain.

For unto you and me belong no more,
 The swords and cymbals of a victor race ;
The seething craftsmen on the humming shore,
 The powers that terrify, the arts that grace.

We live on bleared traditions of old days—
 Vast fables builded on the sands of truth,
From which shine out, through immemorial haze,
 Gleams of our broken strength and faded youth.

We couch at sunset around burial mounds
 Girt with the solemn presences of death ;
In holy kirks and consecrated grounds,
 Whose stones are testimonies to our faith.

Still rolls the world ; but unto us no change
 Comes with the busy action of the years ;
Suns rise and set ; the golden seasons range
 Through the frost-pierced or purple atmospheres.

Could bruised hands crush the brazen throat of night,
 We should not wield the distaff but the lance ;
Could tears and prayers dispel this living night,
 The heavens should quake and yield deliverance.

And yet we trust ; and hungering longings fill
 Our hearts for the green copse and sunny thatch ;
The quiet water by the peak-roofed mill,
 The dear familiar finger on the latch ;

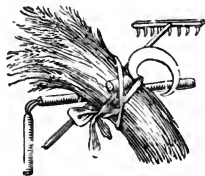
The daisied meadows and the breathing kine,
The evening gatherings by gables brown,
The old, white chapel with its bells divine,
The blue fog hovering o'er the inland town.

Yea, more than these—remembered tones and looks
Which in our dreams find faintest counterparts—
Clear as the glitter of the July brooks
The wild, white lilies blowing in their hearts.

The holy graveyards where our dead repose,
Round roofless ruins in the hazel woods ;
Where the sad summer breeds her fairest rose,
And March fans into life the violet buds.

O friends forlorn, while holy faith and trust
Kindle such God-like passions in our soul,
We need not grovel in the charnel dust,
Nor chaunt one long eternity of dole.

The corn-seed gathered from the shrivelled palm
Of him who slept for ages stark and mute,
Sown in the fallow, blossoms in the calm,
And heavenward bears again its perfect fruit.





ADARE.

THE morn comes freshly from the east,
It strikes with fire the upland ridge,
And pours a shaft of gold between
The midmost shadows of the bridge,
Where, late at eve, shall dance the midge.
Flame fills the immemorial tree,
Which keeps its chestnuts for the time
When harvest banquets through the world,
And the hot breezes flow in rhyme.

Soft sleeps the village in the maze
Of dreary elm and scyamore ;
Soft slides the river's rosy tide
Through blossomed sedges by the shore,
Rushes, and pendent willows hoar.
The little boat moored in the cove
Takes no pulsation from the stream,
But shadowed on the water lies,
The lovely image of a dream.

I leave the village to its rest—
White walls with ivy diapered,
Brown roofs that in the springtime give
Asylum to the happy bird,
Whose wing the southern air has stirred ;
And wandering down the grassy marge
Of Mague, amidst its Paradise,
Turn one green bend of lawn, and, lo !
Three Hundred Years confront mine eyes.

Three Hundred Years in channelled stones,
Hewn in some quarry vast and fair,
But touched with melancholy grey—
That habit of our Irish air—
Which slays, but still knows when to spare.
Chancel, quadrangle, tower are here,
Gaunt cloisters, roof and mullions riven,
With that clear interspace through which
Souls, tired of flesh, looked out to heaven.

I see it all—the choir, the stalls,
The broad east window, smote with blood—
(Bright as six rainbows ribbonéd)—
St Francis' brown-robed brotherhood,
Each with his crucifix of wood.
Slowly the instant pageant fades ;
Ruin returns to leaf and stone ;
A shadow rises from my brain,
And I am, with the sun, alone.

And who were these ? By what access
Of patience did they find their way
To those cold penitential aisles
To stifle self, to bravely pray
Until their hairs grew scant and grey,

And some one plucked them by the sleeve,
Some hour of interrupted breath?
They turned to find who touched them so,
And met the smiling face of Death.

They were not wasted hearts alone
Craving forgiveness and the rod—
Whose hearts' best wine had spilled to earth,
And left the sediment to God;
They heard no outside world applaud.
Their daily boon companions were
The matin lark, the sunset rook;
And for excitement and repose,
The cloister, or the desk-chained book.

Fresh minds, and young, within these walls
True to some master impulse came—
Some thought that in their being lurked,
As in the black flint lurks the flame:
Christ's friends are always not the same.
Rome towered above a prostrate world
The while He walked in Galilee;
He left the Cæsar to his throne,
He kept the children by His knee.

If, to refine his discontent,
With tears and fastings, vacant days,
Statesman or soldier hither came
To trample on his gown or bays,
And heavenward turn his fretful gaze,
Thrice happy he; but happier far
The pure soul, unassoiled by strife;
Repose was but the life of one,
And Action made the other's life.

Heaven knows it all. We blindly move,
Seeking solutions of our fears.
Ah, nobler consolations fall
In rains of penitential tears,
Through those thick hazes peace appears.
We would be wise, we would be good,
We would have heaven our single hope,
And yet insult that single trust
With crucible and telescope.





TRUE TO DEATH.

[“A scouting party of our gallant Italians, advancing nearer the Pope’s fastness, brought back an Irish Zouave. He was wounded in nine places. He had six bullet penetrations in his chest, and three or four (it was hard to distinguish) lance-thrusts in his back. He died in great agony, incessantly calling for water; but no murmur of complaint escaped his lips. He was the apotheosis of a soldier.”—*London Paper*, 1870.]

BE it where it may be, on beleaguered land or
sea,
To the last, the red last, lives our Irish
chivalry.

The Wild Geese fly away; there is turbulence in France,
For Louis quakes and prays, and his enemies advance.

But they scatter them as spray round the wave-dividing
cliff;

On fields they strew the bones of invaders stark and
stiff.

And Paris leaps in praise, her gold trumpet at her lips,
For the glory of the Irish, and the shame of hosts and
ships.

Forgotten was that triumph, but it lives, it lives again,
In the splendour of our brotherhood—companionship of
pain.

And though no more (on treachery may light the blight
accurst)

The ensigns of the Irish through the Gallic vanguard
burst,

In other fields, not all remote, their emerald standard
shone,

When down went the imperial flag, and France stood all
alone.

Like the tigress of the Deluge as she heard the waters
seeth,

And leaped unto the highest peak, her cub between her
teeth,

So stood Red France, so stands Red France, her bare
head to the sleet,

With Paris girdled to her heart, and freedom at her
feet.

O banner of the race that lives, predestined to endure!

O oriflamme of people tried and whom the fire keeps
pure!

Unrol thy folds majestic, for underneath thee lies,
His lips to sunset open, and his eyes shut to the skies,

As true a soldier, true a heart, as ever, ever met
The batt'ries' crash, the rifles' hail, the storm of bayonet.

Heavy his heart, this hour perhaps, divorced from friends
and home;

Behind him rise, in middle air, the panting roofs of
Rome.

Behind him sits the Pontiff chief, crowned with a triple crown—

The sign that sees the empires and the dynasties go down :

As complications come to naught, conspiracies fall dead
Beneath the everlasting march of Time's avenging tread.

He knows his mission, and he dies, sublimed by hope
and faith—

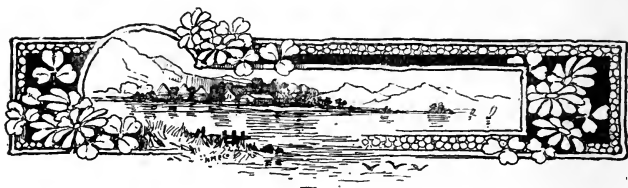
This the gold gate whose avenue o'erbridges years and death.

O glorious death, to die for this ! to gather into rest,
With lances splintered in the back and bullets in the breast !

Torn by the storm of circumstance, struck down in war's eclipse,

With "Jesu Maria" in his heart, and Ireland on his lips.





IN THE NIGHT TIME.

AN ARTISAN'S GARRET.

T*INK, chink* : 'tis the rain on the roof—
The dull, the monotonous rain;
And there comes from the corner a querulous cry—
The cry of a creature in pain.

I see that white face though the garret is black,
For the darkness refuses a ray;

A piteous expression, pinched, asking for food,
And longing in sleep for the day.

O child of my heart, hush that terrible wail,
It creeps through my marrow and brain :

The barns overflow with the wealth of the year,
Yet the robbers deny thee a grain.

Lord ! matched with this torture of body and soul

I count swiftest death but a trifle;

'Twere better than starve to fall under the hail,

Or be clubbed by the butt of the rifle.

Tink, chink : 'tis the rain on the roof;

And my wife murmurs quick in her dreams;

Is she walking once more where we met and we wed

In that dear land of meadows and streams ?

Ah, perish the fancy, the selfish deceit—

How she haggles and hucksters for more—

She is pawning her cloak for a morsel of bread

For the little one stretched on the floor.

And her once tender heart's like the heart of a Jew,

As she fights for the penny denied—

The penny to purchase a measure of milk

For the boy sobbing fast at her side.

Preach of patience to Death! Oh, all-seeing God!

From my lips take this bitterest chalice.

Better fester and rot in the hulk of the hulks—

Better swing like a thief from the gallows.

Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof,

And the wind in the shivering street;

Ah, well for the wind and the rain they care not

For the morrow and something to eat.

No ghastly beseechings of hunger-blanch'd lips

Sound mournfully wild in their ears,

Whilst mine is the grief frozen solid and cold,

And alien to merciful tears.

I will toil—give me work—labour early and late,

And none shall smite stouter and stronger—

Coin blood into bread if it drive from the door

This coffinless carcase of hunger.

“Lie still, trade is dull; all the markets are crammed,

Little good in this meaningless clamour;

The furnace is empty, the rust eats its way

Through chisel, and anvil, and hammer.”

Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof,

Another day breaks in the skies;

Its light will look down through the rent overhead

On haggard and ravenous eyes.

My poor wife gets up in the glimmering dawn,
 With the cough of the grave at her throat,
 And she covers her shoulders—lean, wasted, and cold—
 With the rags of my twenty-patched coat.
 A spark in the fireplace—a crackle—a gleam,
 And she crouches her down in despair
 To warm her thin hands at a morsel of fire—
 The back of our very last chair—
 Rocking and groaning. Oh ! woman, may God
 Send rest to the pangs of thy sorrow ;
 There's nothing to sell, and there's nothing to pawn,
 And the poor are too friendless to borrow.

Tink, chink : 'tis the rain on the roof,
 And my little one creeps from his bed,
 Kneels down by his mother, looks up in her face—
 On her shoulders he pillows his head.
 They gaze on the embers, the flame's dying out,
 And closer together they sit :—
 "Have you any bread, mother, for poor little Tom ?"
 "My darling, I haven't a bit."
 No tears, no repinings, no curses, no sighs,
 Pass up from the shivering pair ;
 But I hear in the lulls of this tempest of March
 The whisper of voices in prayer.
 "May God grant that father to-day may get work ;
 May God give him patience and meekness ;
 May God send us comfort, and help in this hour
 Of trial and hunger and weakness."

Tink, chink : 'tis the rain on the roof.
 Has heaven then truly decreed
 That men of this land—of the Isle of the Saints—
 Are to fight with perennial need ?

Is a Christian to starve, to submit, to bow down
At some high consecrated behest,
Hugging close the old maxims that "weakness is
strength,"
And "whatever is, is for the best" ?
"Bear your woes, O my people, they're badges of grace ;
Rebellion 's the devil's own snare,
Of the traitors appealing to bullet and sword,
As you value salvation, beware."
Oh, texts of debasement ! Oh, creed of deep shame !
Oh, gospel of infamy treble !
Who strikes when he's struck, and who takes when
he starves,
In the eyes of the Lord is no rebel.

Tink, chink : 'tis the rain on the roof :
My boy there may yet come a day
When, armed with the sharp sword of vengeance and
right,
The wrongs of the past you'll repay.
My bones they may moulder in Pauperdom's sleep
(Not mine be the blame or disgrace),
Forget me, if you will, but, boy, never forget
Your poor mother's death-stricken face.
They've killed her, the tyrants. Each hope of our
hearth
But the hope of reprisal is fled—
They've slain her, they've robbed her, thy mother, my
wife,
May her blood be as fire on their head !
The past is the past, but the future comes on,
A future that's teeming with labour,
When the hypocrite cant of the knaves of to-day
Shall be drowned in the ring of the sabre.

Tink, chink : 'tis the rain on the roof.

O prodigal scorners of time,
Is meanness a proof of God's chosen elect—

Revolution a damnable crime?

We fight and we struggle and conquer abroad,

Little recking the pain or the doom ;

We pine, and we starve, till we perish and rot—

God pity us—only at home.

I rise to go forth—yet a crust may be got—

And I think "Is this ever to be?"

No, no, answers heaven, be true to yourselves,

'Tis only the true that are free.

Up, manhood of Ireland, and silence the slaves

Who work agitation and plunder ;

Up, brothers of Ireland, retemper your souls

In the red battle's lightning and thunder.





IN EXILE.

AH ! 'tis more sweet to me than truth could be—
The garden, and the casement, the red house,
The broken column in the plot of thyme,
And the stone gods with ivy-circled brows :
How many years ? Say ten—say yesterday ;
Dear, no heart's calendar obeys the moon ;
Life is the keyboard of a master tune
No matter who may play.

When we met first, the heavy-laden air
Was thick with the rank steams of autumn's breath ;
For us the earth leaned backward upon spring,
But, for the roses, earth had uttered : death.
Here blew your China blossom, gold and cream ;
It smelled of the cursed east ; the pard-like flower
Sent out a shrivelled blossom for an hour—
A swift and perfumed gleam.

I love the place for all its vague regrets,
Its hopes and visions—hosts of these were true !
I love it for the wind that blew at noon,
And, shaking the acacias, came with you.

'Twas there you stood the morning that I cried :

“Hate me, or be mine—love me you must ;”

And all the glory of a woman's trust

From this pure face replied.

You know the river there ; by deep Doonass

Whitens the rapids to the star or sun,

And the torn deep sends up incessantly

A cry of anguish or an orison.

My God ! this hour I'd kneel me in the dew,

And wet my lips with the frost-mellowed grass,

To kiss the path where first I saw you pass—

The path of box and yew.

I knew I never kept, and could not keep,

The litany of promises I made,

When last, in that red boat, amid the sedge

We slid down the green phantasmal shade.

You bent above the tortuous, slow foam,

And marked the huge weed writhing in the lymph—

What was it, sweet ? The palace of the nymph,

The strong house of the gnome.

Well, whilst you fashioned these imaginings,

I, speaking in the pulses of the oar,

Prejudged the life, the home that might be ours,

Not in this land, but on some dearer shore :

Where laughs the Irish laugh—the Celtic note,

Where the cock crows at midnight, and the lark

Shouts to the sun, whilst half the world is dark,

With quickly throbbing throat.

We may not see it, Alice, the grey isle,

Anchored in the tumultuous gale and mist

Of seas that vex the depths from to coast to coast,

Of skies that change from night to amethyst.

For I am doomed; and you are doomed with me.
I would have saved her, raised her if I could,
Spilling upon the altar steps my blood,
If that could make her free.

Your heart is in your eyes! You love her too,
Italian Alice; and your lips flash white.
God of all Mercies, 'tis an Alpine storm,
With two great planets shining down the night!
O face so crossed with pity and revenge,
For the cursed land that I and mine call theirs—
Cursed land of breaking hearts and ruffian snares:
Cursed land that knows no change!

Cursed, and yet dear! Oh, Alice, let us go—
Cursed, and yet dear! There's dew upon the grass!
Walk where the granite glimmers through the turf.
Cursed, and yet dear! The left path of the pass,
And by the steaming vineyard, the way's clear.
Just sing that ballad, Alice, as we wind
Down the sheer hill, the sun and snow behind:
Thrice cursed, and yet most dear!





GOLDSMITH'S GRAVE.



LOVE this quiet Temple nook,
This ancient haunt of wren and rook,
Thick writ with legends like a book.

Dark circled in the town it lies,
Above it loom the misty skies,
Outside the songs of commerce rise.

Ten paces from the battling street,
Lurks the old-fashioned, quaint retreat,
A land of murmurs, loud and sweet.

Afar the yellow river gleams,
Within there is a sound of streams,
An island lulled in dreams it seems.

There, open to the sun and rain,
There, alien unto tears and pain,
There, whilst the seasons wax or wane;—

Rich-hearted Goldsmith takes his rest,
Earth's silent, unobtrusive guest,
Between the sunrise and the west.

Great gable roofs rise all around,
Their tops in clouds of vapour drowned;
Vast shadows floor the level ground.

A fountain sings, and when it stops,
Bell-like from out a privet copse,
The robin's benediction drops.

Bravely he sleeps, and never knows
When spring comes flying o'er the snows,
When summer wears her palm and rose.

His genius, ripe and secular,
To us is no cloud-brooding star;
God knoweth how it flames afar.

How risen above this misty state,
Moved by an impulse swift and straight,
It burns at heaven's magnific gate.

He's gone: his dust below us lies,
But were the veil rent from our eyes,
His soul might shine from yonder skies.

I love those alleys deep and old,
While all around, in gusts of gold,
The autumn leaves fall manifold.

Great Johnson leans at yonder door,
With aspect cynical and frore,
With goodness in his heart's heart's core.

Grave, and sedate, and overwrought,
A "Rambler" turns he, thought by thought,
With philosophic insight fraught,

I see sly Boswell near him stand,
With tablet-slip and pen in hand,
Noting some aphorism grand.

Little knows he of prose or verse,
His sense of Art is to rehearse
His Master, his great universe.

Then by-and-by, as sunset tolls,
That despot of men's brains and souls,
Huge Burke, amid the twilight strolls.

A lattice opens on the square,
And Goldsmith, with his wind-blown hair,
Thrusts out his head and hails the pair.

"How fares the Doctor?" "All is well."
"Will Blank's sublime heroic sell?"
"Does Burke still guess at heaven and hell?"

Thus Goldsmith: "Here are children three
Fresh from God's mint, the nursery;
I'll go and kiss them—wait you three."

All day the flaming moth hath writ,
All day his genial head was lit
With quips of country-scented wit.

"Beau Tibbs" had to his garret clomb
The "Traveller" pined afar from home,
Or "Doctor Primrose" turned his tome.

And ever, on the creaking stair,
He heard a step creep unaware;
The quest: "Is Mister Goldsmith there?"

“Copy, good sir” ; his head he shakeꝝ,
A queer face at the Devil makes,
And into merriest laughter breaks.

But with the labour, and the day
Ended and over, care away.
“Come, gracious Doctor, we’ll be gay.”

They pass me, moving towards the Fleet,
I hear the tread of myriad feet,
Beating along the dear, old street.

One word I catch amid the stir:
The Doctor, to his worshipper,
Growls, and intones his mighty “Sir”;

Poor Noll, half patient draws a breath
Of curious pain ; ’tis life, ’tis death,
Just what the Doctor fashioneth.

Ah ! dear, dear Poet, lord of heart,
Master and mystery of Art,
In thee the Graces were apart.

Couched on a cell of vulgar clay,
Thy soul’s irradiant beauty lay,
A sepulchre from day to day.

But ever, in thy noblest theme,
Ever in thy heart’s sweetest dream,
Ireland and Auburn were thy theme—

The two were one ; and she who passed
Gathering weeds, where lilies glassed
Their faces where the whirlpools massed

Their currents, was a subtle thought
Of Ireland, cursed and overwrought—
Of Ireland cursed, and wrongly sought

Others indeed have sung a strain
Of terror, passion, peace, or pain ;
They've passed away—thy songs remain.

Here in this quiet Sabbath light,
Whilst the sad trees are gold and bright,
I stand, no priest, no Sybarite,

Beside thy grave, thy lonely urn,
Whilst all the trees that flame and burn,
Despondent o'er thine ashes mourn.





A CANADIAN FESTIVAL.

ROUND the oak trees, round the oak trees, round
the palms and pine trunks hoary,
Bearded with the moss of ages, linked with dim
cathedral arches,
Gather we, as, setting seaward, sinks the sun behind the
forests;
And the moon, a white-cheeked phantom, walks amid
the rosy meadows;
As the first star, born of twilight, trembles overhead the
cedars,
And the marsh fowl, westward flying, fleck the slow
decreasing splendour,
And the smoke plumes from our log huts glimmer blueely,
upward flowing;—
We are gathered, not in silence, for the hour hath
inspiration,
We are gathered, not in dolour, though our hearts are
brimmed with sorrow,—
Sorrow for the Past behind us—sorrow for the Future
coming;

Ruined homes and lonely churchyards; peace and cant
and rotting quiet,
Banners flaunted, not in battle, but on courtly towers
and breezes,
Swords flashed forward, not in conflict, but like faggots
bound together.
Ah! the world forgets its mission; ah! the days are
growing coarser,
And the clay of common nature mixes with the brighter
metal
Till the earth is bronzed with meanness; and the watch-
cries of our fathers
Blazon hatchments, blazon tombstones; dumb yet myriad-
voiced reproaches
To the sloth that eats the Present, and the shame that
waits the Future.

Let us hope: within the darkness which doth front our
straining vision,
Something new is taking birth and struggling bravely to
the sunlight;
Infant wailings! yet we hear them; baby pleadings!
they have potency,
And anon shall swell to thunders; when the tender
hands grow firmer,
Broader in their grasp of finger, stronger in their knitted
muscle,
Fit to hurl broad bolts and upwards bear the buckler, in
whose shadow,
Peoples maddened by oppression and athirst for
retribution,
Forest-hewers, water-bearers to the God-accursed
oppressors,

Shall fling down their tools and shackles, and arrayed
in triple conscience,
Forward, onward, wheresoever Right is bound and
Power is rampant,
Bear the creed of liberation, and the shafts that smite
Resistance.

Dimly seaward, where the silence broodeth black across
the orient;
Kingdom of a million mornings—gates that daily bloom
with sunrise,
Glorious east; around whose outposts, when the fogs
are crimson-shafted
By the arrows of the daybreak, cocks awaken, clarion-
throated;
Far away behind the billows, scarfed with vapour, maned
with lightning,
Far below familiar planets, ever broadening through the
twilight—
Through the sad Canadian sunsets—lies an island sphered
in ocean,
Scattered o'er with flying sea mist. In her vales the
green wheat bloometh
Through the curvèd palms of April, and the blood-red
moons of harvest;
There amid the homestead shadows, orchards riot, apples
ripen,
And the mellow pears wax luscious in the bronzing winds
of autumn.
There in lonely woodland places, where the marsh-pool
fringed with rushes
Lieth like a lake of quiet, sits the solemn plumèd heron.
And on uplands, bramble-crested, phantom-draped, in
ash and willow,

Gloom the gravestones of our fathers, mothers, brothers,
sisters, sweethearts
(Christ receive them !). From the nor'land where the
cliffs spur back the surges,
To the south that steeps its headlands in the swathes of
the Atlantic,
Plenty floweth. Heavens, avenge us ! We have wrongs
and recollections.
At our mother's board we hungered, on our household
hearths we trembled,
Strangers fattened on our labours, slipped the red-eyed
hounds of havoc,
And, o'er ruined homes and altars, chased us from the
land that bore us.
Earth, preserve the bones bequeathed in our sorrow to
thy keeping,
In thy vast sepulchral silence, treasure their decaying
ashes.
We have said "farewell" in patience, fixing eyes upon
the future,
When the tumult that's approaching, though its triumph
hour be distant,
Shall bear witness to our vengeance. Hark ! there tolls
from out the hemlocks
The low chimes of prayer ; how often in the valleys of
dear Ireland,
When the waggon crossed the corn folds, 'mid the
sheaves of yellow barley,
Have we heard the silver vesper, breaking through our
harvest carols !
God be with it, angels watch it—land of Saints and
Bards and Soldiers—
Cresset in the dark of Europe ! garden of the Faith of
Ages !

God be with it—God be with it! though our hands
delve foreign quarries,
Wrenching drops of gold from granite; though the
crown of man's ambition
Glitter on our aspirations, Ireland, we cannot forget
thee!
Glorious home of storm and darkness, bloom and radiance,
truth and beauty,
Blessings calm thy mournful present, triumph bless thy
dawning future!

Thus they sang, a group of exiles. In the low Canadian
silence
Streamed the river through the forest, with a sad unceas-
ing wailing—
Wailing like a pining spirit; in the splendour o'er the
tree tops
Eddied round the dusky eagle; and from bosks and
brown-leafed jungles
Shrilled the pipes of birds: slow lapsing gathered thicker
half the twilight,
Till the grass was aisled in darkness. Then the log fires,
piles of odour,
Crackled in the crispèd clearing, and the smoke wreaths
drifted nor'ward.
And the flames in fans leaped upward, lapping tongues
of panting crimson,
Round the huge boles of the pine trees and the branches
of the cedars,
Till the foliage glimmered golden, shaken by the misty
sea wind.

“Home, sing of home, of lonely Ireland, gentle Ellen!
Of our country

Let us hear a grey tradition, hymned in peace above
the tree tops."

Rose she up, a tender maiden, at the bidding of her
lover,

Knelt beside her grey-haired father, singing, wound her
arms around him :—

THE SPRING.

Now blows the white rose round our garden pales,
Now by the wicket, breathes the scented briar ;
Now flowers the happy lilac in the sun,
Now the laburnum wakes in gusts of fire ;
But never, never shall they bloom for me.

High on the uplands, the brown woods are touched
By gentle visitings of morning rain ;
The cowslip in the budding hedgerows teems,
The sun-eyed daisies whiten half the plain ;
Ah never, never shall they bloom for me.

Thou com'st no more to build below our eaves,
Long-wingèd swallow, for they are no more !
Poor redbreast, thou hast ceased to shrill thy heart
In friendly shadows by our open door !
Ah never, never shall ye sing for me.

Dear mother, thou hast ceased at morn to pass,
By leafy lattices, to watch us sleep ;
Thy palms are fettered with the salt seaweed,
Thy head is rocking in unfathomed deep ;
Ah never, never wilt thou come to me.

O home, O friends, O long familiar haunts—
Chapel, and brook, and wood, and mossy bridge ;

The fisher bending by the shallow stream,
The windmill whirring on the glebe-land's ridge ;
Ah ! never, never shall you shine for me.

Sad are our memories, sad, unbidden tears,
Deep mingled ecstasies of peace and pain,
Sad are the thoughts that glimmer round our hearts,
The odours of wild-flowers in falling rain,
Ah ! bitter, bitter are my thoughts to me !

Good-bye ! and I could say unnumbered times,
To friend, and stream, and tree—good-bye, good-
bye !

Only remains to comfort us a while
Love, like a late light in a darkening sky,
Ah love, in sorrow, thou abid'st with me.

She ceased, and for sorrowful pauses, around the red ring
of the log fire
Dumb was the silence of anguish, whilst she nestled close
to her father,
And hid her white face on his bosom. Then Owen
moved back in the darkness
And pressed his brown hands to his eyelids : "Sing for
us, Owen !" they clamoured ;
"Sing us a song of the mountains ; a brave ballad,
breathing of heather,
And stirred with the pulses of torrents." He, laughing,
slung forward his rifle—
"Then let's have a chorus, my brothers ; and here's to
the brave iron mountains ;
Here's to the Galtees—hurrah ! men, and long may they
flourish defiant !"

Up through the dusk of the forest ascended the cry of
the exiles,
A cataract arching a darkness, a-roar in the span of its
falling.

THE MOUNTAINS.

My spurs are rusted, my coat is rent,
My plume is dank with rain ;
And the thistle down and the barley beard
Are thick on my horse's mane ;
But my rifle's as bright as my sweetheart's eye,
And my arm is strong and free—
What care have I for your king or laws ?
I'm an outlawed rapparee !
Click, click your glasses, friends, with mine,
And give your grasp to me ;
I'm England's foe, I'm Ireland's friend—
Click, click, I'm a rapparee !

The mountain cavern is my home,
High up in the crystal air ;
My bed is the limestone, iron-ribbed,
And the brown heath smelling fair.
Let George or William only send
His troops to burn and shoot—
We'll meet them upon equal ground
And fight them foot to foot.
Click, click your glasses, friends, with mine,
The midnight's made for glee ;
Stout hearts beat fast for Ireland yet—
Yes—I am a rapparee !

Hunted from out our fathers' homes,
Pursued with steel and shot,
A bloody warfare we must wage,
Or the gibbet be our lot.

Hurrah ! the war is welcome work,
The hated outlaw knows ;
He steps unto his country's love
O'er the corpses of his foes.
Click, click your glasses, friends, with mine,
In coming days I see
Stern labours for our country's weal—
Yes—I am a rapparee.

“ Bravo ! strong Owen,” they shouted, and the sorrowful
hush of the forest
Was slit by their clear ringing bravos, till the green
lizard shook in the grasses,
And the fronds of the oak palpitated. Then one sang
a story of passion,
And the soul-threaded tones of her anguish flowed forth
on the air like a wailing :—

TIME AND A VIOLET.

'Tis many years, remorseful years, since last we met ;
The turnstile of the dark oatfield in chaff was set ;
On the brown barn roof lurked the light that swam out
of the moaning sea,
Dearest, God's gentlest peace was mine, for thou wert
there with me, with me.

The purple moors along the east with fog were white,
But all our garden paths ran clear into the night ;
Over the pea plants, blossomless, hummed many a wander-
ing-homeward bee,
I felt the glory of thy love, standing close by me,
by me.

Thou did'st not fail when smiting bars unroofed our
home,
Thou did'st not weep, though thy strong cheek was reft
of bloom,
But in the fire of suffering most patient thou did'st look
at me,
And though my heart was nigh to burst, weeping,
I turned my eyes to thee.

What doth it gain to tell that woe crushed thy brave
frame,
Till sickness knit thy temples round with girths of
flame?
Thou died'st upon the mountain scarp, in houseless,
friendless misery,
For what was I? I knew not what, what could I do
but wait for thee.

Peace to thy ashes where they rest in green Kincor,
The yellow shallows shelve in sands along the shore;
Peace unto thee, and rest to me, from heaven to-night
I only crave
Time and a violet to plant on thy forgotten, stoneless
grave.

"Arrah, Willy Delany," cried John, "come and give us
a tune on your bagpipe!
The night's getting late and I'm anxious to dance all
the stars out of distance.
And give me your hand, Peggy Reidy; hark! there
goes 'The Jolly Foxhunter!'
Whoo! sure 'tisn't dreaming and crooning will do the
right work for old Ireland.

Jewel! look at the moon, she comes out just to peep at
a real Kerry double,
Give it to her, my sons, heel and toe, for they say she
delights in diversion!"

Then up sprang fantastical shadows, and never did
Tempè or Provence
Behold in the hearts of her valleys a merrier flock of
wild dancers.
At last the grey morning winked faintly across the hot
breath of the revels,
And back to the log huts they wandered, with prayers
for dear Ireland and freedom.





LUGGELAW.

BY thy dim wave, O Luggelaw !
The mountain fir, dismantled, towers,
And spring with winter dallying,
Has garlands sparse of buds and flowers.
Above thee rolls the ruling cloud,
Around thee creeps the sliding mist ;
But in thy central current burns
One blaze of stainless amethyst.
The glory of the hills is thine—
The clinking bell—the birds' delight—
And this serenest glimpse of heaven,
Which smites thee with protracted light.

Firm knit his sinews, steeled and wired,
The boatman grasps the beating oars ;
We drift into a land of dreams—
Dark vistas of enchanted shores.
The mighty mountains hem us in—
Above them is the perfect sky—
Loud through their purple peaks and scalps
The March winds pour their litany.

All else is silent save the waves'
Soft, silver, lapping undertone,
And the slow motion of the woods,
Which sway and sway, and moan and moan

Clear cut and cold, in lucent depths,
Spread the pure heaven, the gorge, the cliff,
The bent ash shaking on the rock,
The woman in the distant skiff;
The thin, white line that steeply winds
And curls around the lonely ranche—
The boulders anchored in the slope,
Where once rolled down the avalanche.
The oarsman pauses in his toil,
And points his finger overhead,
" 'Twas there," he cries, "in other years,
St Kevin made his flinty bed."

The grey sea-eagle builds his nest—
Rough eyrie—in the beetling coast,
The eagle of the mountain makes
The unscaled crag his home and host;
And he—the saint—the eagle-eyed—
Far from the sounding ways of men—
Found home and sanctuary sweet
In one rough crevice of this glen.
His churches rise amidst the wilds,
His name resounds from sea to sea,
Though to his race alone remains
A fragrant, fruitful memory.

Deep dipped the oars—the sharp wind rang
Along the intertangled vale—
The boat bent over to the flood,
And sudden sunset fired her sail

A far bell tolled from off the height,
A grey cloud veiled the mountain crest,
The maiden moon rose curved and wan,
And crimson twilight filled the west.
And so we mutely floated on,
Out of the lake's mysterious grace,
Back to the dreary, dreary world
Of consciousness and commonplace.





THE QUESTION.



YOU asked me, twice, in anxious mood,
What good can Ireland win, achieve,
By boasting of the right of blood—
What sullen Day can she retrieve?
I answer : for the common good,
Let her be Hopeful and Believe.

If destined to be conquered—slain,
By native foe or foreign fate,
Of Ireland solely would remain
A memory void of space or date :
A dim tradition of the main—
A leper by the city gate.

But Ireland wears no lepers' sores :
Her eye is clear, her stature strong ;
Through her strong veins the life-tide pours
In mighty tides of speech and song ;
He watches, by the echoing shores,
The birth of Right, the death of Wrong.

Poor toilers we, with sword and brain,
We help her with our utmost power ;
We write her name on rath and plain—
Her banner plant o'er fosse and tower.
We watch the seedling in the rain,
And wait till heaven shall give it flower.

Greece fought ; at last, her great heart burst :
Her spirit quailed before the foe ;
Poland, the mightiest and the first,
Surrendered at the triple blow.
But Ireland ten times dared the worst,
And England never laid her low.

Persistent in her hidden strength,
And wakeful in her vigil's dream,
Confiding, surely, that at length,
The issue of the years would seem,
Not the poised torch and amaranth,
But Freedom and the Sun a-beam.

It has not come ; a hundred cells
Hold fast our bravest and our best ;
They sing in pain the air that dwells
In every movement of unrest ;
The anthem of the heart that tells
How man is cursed and God is blessed.

Again you turn to me and say :
"But why such gallant sacrifice ?
The peaceful lands before them lay,
They needed no avenging cries ;
They might have clearly said their say,
And spared the tears of women's eyes."

And, answer thus, I freely give :
Suppose them happy, self-content—
Suppose them cursed and fugitive,
Their natures took their natural bent ;
They knew the Nation could not live,
By fraud and foul oppression rent.

They saw this Ireland trampled down,
They hoped no mercy from the foe,
In wasted field and ruined town,
Altar and hovel tumbled low ;
And by the Harp that wears no Crown,
They swore to lay the Saxon low.

They failed, I grant you—Klapki failed—
But not the cause for which he bled ;
Disaster, blood, and tears entailed,
Till beaten Hungary ran red ;
And Europe howled, and Europe railed
Above the victors and the dead.

But still the mighty Magyar Race,
Persisting, won the doubtful day :
The Empire, charmed to sudden grace,
Achieved its mission—forced its way ;
The Nation's sons got breathing space.
Its heart resumed its pulse and sway.

Are we unworthy less renown ?
Are we unworthy less reward ?
We, who despite our Master's frown,
Cling to tradition of the sword,
And prize the axe that strikes us down,
More precious than the spiteful word.

I say : let history answer this,
For us we freely risk the chance,
And, meanwhile, be it joy or bliss,
Our constant motto is : Advance.
To ladies, whispered voice and kiss ;
For freemen, rifle, sword, and lance.

You see our corpses strew the field ;
You see our standard in the dust ;
You see our legions backward reeled,
Before the foes' imperious thrust.
We'll dare all that before we yield,
The Cause is good, and God is just.





DEAD.

ALLEN, LARKIN, AND O'BRIEN.

“**D**EAD,” said the grey mother, crooning
At night by the quick wasting fire ;
“Dead,” said the shuddering children,
And clung to the knees of their sire ;
“Dead,” ah, abhorred consummation !
Would God we had strength to forgive—
“False,” cried the storm in the housetop,
“For ever they live.”

Pale student with palm-shaded eyebrows,
And lips white and rigid as death,
You see in the knout and the coffin
The emblems of hope and of faith ;
Three graves in a vile British prison
Where never shall bloom flower or leaf—
Three graves ! they're the seed of our triumph,
Our Trust, our Belief.

Had they died for a dream they were noble,
Having died for the truth they were great,
Proud hearts that beat highest and swiftest,
As swiftest and darkest gloomed fate ;

We were told we were dead as a nation—

A corpse with its face to the sky—

Objectless, powerless, hopeless—

They gave it the lie.

And their blood to confession was witness,

Their deaths were the seal of their creed,

Translating the visions of ages

In actual substance and deep ;

They, and they fell as befit them—

They died the brave deaths of brave men;

Let them leap from their ashes to-morrow,

They'd strike so again.

Ay, strike whilst above this good nation

One emerald tatter shall fly,

And God though He quenches the starlight

Shall leave us one mark in the sky;

One wreck from the enemy's pillage,

Though sodden with bloodstain and dust—

Oh graves in the cloud-covered prison—

Three shrines of our Trust.

For if Ireland, cursed, beggared, and slandered,

Had nothing to show for her cause,

Save protests, remonstrances, wailings,

Against England her lash and her laws,

The Nations might blush for our meanness,

Or laugh at our eloquent might;

Those corpses below have redeemed us,

They fought the good fight.

They fought it—they proved to our Masters

The truth that too long was unfelt :

No dungeon can hold or extinguish

The fire and the force of the Celt;

'Twas seen in the white face of London—

'Twas seen in its wild unrepose,
Three men stirred the land like an earthquake,
And these men were those.

“It is good,” saith the Chronicler, “wholesome

To pray for the peace of the dead.”

But the heart of a nation secured them

The palms of the martyrs who bled;
For Ireland they poured forth their life tide,
Heroic, defiant, and grand—

Rest happy, forerunners of Freedom,
God save the old land !





EDWARD MARTIN.

[A printer named Edward Martin was fatally injured in a cab accident in Drury Lane, in October 1869. Whilst unconscious he several times muttered the name of "Kelly," and the police, then eagerly on the lookout for Colonel Kelly, the Fenian organiser, rescued at Manchester, concluded that the injured man was the required revolutionary leader, and bore him off to prison, where he was surrounded by detectives. His death was undoubtedly accelerated by the rough treatment he received. Partly to protest against this treatment, partly to deceive the authorities as to his identity, and partly to honour an earnest and steadfast worker in their country's cause, the Irish in London organised a public funeral. Martin was a native of Kilkenny, and was at one time on the printing staff of the *Irish People*. He is buried in Stratford churchyard.]



O cry from the long-marshalled masses
That stream through the City to-day;
No clamour of voices exultant,
No vehement banners' display.
Like a sea of black pines on an iceberg
Close-columned and clustered they come;
And yet not a peal from the bugle,
No roll from the drum.
Above them, victoriously nodding,
Shakes ebon and multiplied plume,
Distinct, in the light of October—
Six darknesses seen in the gloom;
And low, 'neath this forest of silence,
He sleeps in the swathes of his shroud—
A warrior stretched on his buckler—
A star in a cloud.

Whose ashes thus trouble the highway?

Whose silently move to that bourne

Where tyrannies never may trouble,

And never shall patriot mourn?

They're his who, in shame and disaster,

Beside us unflinchingly stood :

Ay, his who would pour in our struggle

His heart's brightest blood.

With the brain of the seer, the perception

Which sublimates instinct and thought,

Amidst us from boyhood to manhood

He modestly, silently wrought.

Not eloquent he, but laborious,

Not boastful, yet ready to die,

If we could but fling the old banner

More near to the sky.

In dens, and in by-ways of London,

Long leagues from the Nore of his youth,

He toiled as the shining apostle

Of Freedom, Exertion, and Truth.

He left to the babblers their babble,

He left to pretenders their fame ;

And what has he left unto Ireland?—

A creed and a name !

Yea, more ; the rare mystical talent

Which will not be vanquished—forego

The work that's in hand, should no certain

Result be the fruit of a blow.

Persistence and hope his convictions,

He practised the tenets he preached ;

Sleep well in the calm of thy silence,

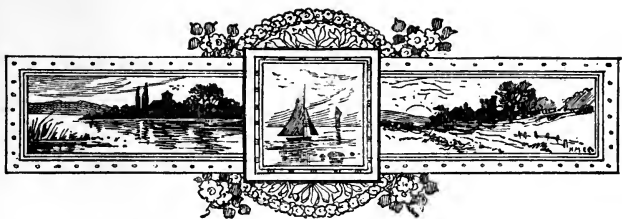
By Death overreached.

That death's not in vain, yet lamented—
For once it has brought face to face,
In thunder-thrilled highways of London,
The strength of our Foes and our Race.
They looked, they beheld our battalions
File past with the roar of a tread
Loud enough to pour panic through England—
Or wake up the dead.

We, Jews of the west, in this Ghetto
Are hated, derided, and banned ;
And toil as we may, there's against us
The ravenous, blood-spilling hand.
We, Jews of the west, in this Ghetto
Are Irish in conscience and core ;
And swear by the coffin of Martin,
We'll bear it no more.

One dies, and his friends gather round him—
Ten—twelve, thirty thousand they come—
Not a blast, I have writ, from the bugle,
No mustering beat of the drum.
But give us the sword and the trumpet,
Let England rise up full of trust,
The invisible legions behind us
Would stamp her to dust.

Through many veils, heaven discloses
The purport, the aim of its plan :
Our Ireland above the pall weepeth :
Our nation is less by a man.
Have hope, O despairing, O heartless,
We dared not a guess at our strength,
And here, by the green grave of Martin,
We KNOW IT AT LENGTH.



TO — IN PENAL SERVITUDE.

AN arid island, seething in the sun,
Heaped sand and ashes where the salt weeds
grow,
Bitter and harsh as the rank weed upon
The rotting frieze of some cursed portico,
Through which the devastating sea-winds blow.
This is thy home, O Friend of former days,
Nor less my friend to-day, that leagues divide,
With intervening stretch of land and tide,
And alien stars that o'er our rooftops blaze.

Well, we made not the world—shaped not our fate—
Owned not control of shifting circumstance ;
'Twas ours to humbly trust and humbly wait—
How opposite, withal, has fallen our chance :
Friends, home, for me ; for you disseverance !
Grim London quakes around me as I write—
Highway and by-way teem and swarm with life—
The shouting of the combatants at strife,
With brazen mutiny fills day and night.

But thou, fast pinioned to that barren shore,
Hearst the ceaseless raving of the wave
Mixed with the clank of chains, the warder's roar,
The dying protest of the tortured slave,
Whom earth the merciful affords a grave—
A long asylum in her silent breast,
Where he sleeps well, no more to feel the lash,
Nor dread the lifted rifle's sudden flash
In that far bourne where peace is manifest.

I think I see you, as in dear, past times ;
Temples o'erclustered with the dusky gold
Which the sun pours through boughs of singing limes—
The pensive mouth—blue eyes austerely bold,
Proud head thrown back, and arms in massive fold.
We sit in that fair chamber looking to
The rounded garden where the lilac flowers—
The beech made music to the flying showers,
And half the windows dripped with April dew.

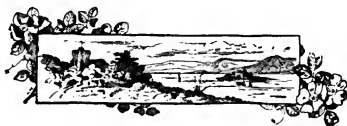
"Ireland was dead, not buried"—thus they spoke—
Dead of a broken heart—abased, discrowned,
Her fair neck circled with her tyrant's yoke;
And round her bier no sob of pitying sound—
For choked grief made the silence all profound.
Traitors and knaves had stabbed her to the heart;
But you had faith ; she will, you cried, arise :
Some blessed Easter morning, earth and skies
Shall see her from the ash and cere-cloth start.

O Hope august, that, through those dismal years,
Survived immutable, as if God bid
Be still the dial shade that ever steers
Its path round the eternal pyramid,
Whose bases in the desert sands are hid !

Men sneered, reviled—dwarfed souls that could not see
The after harvest in the buried wheat ;
But you persisted ; and, the task complete,
Yours is the suffering—yet, the victory !

Look through the savage bars that hem you in—
Look forth, great heart ! The earth is changing face,
Hope, courage, labour, have begun to win,
And Ireland 'mid the Nations cries for place.
That cry may be disposed a little space,
But you have made it potent to the end.
Pace thy poor dungeon with a gladdened brain
Though bitter be thy heritage of pain,
What triumph can thy triumph's force transcend ?

Man has not witnessed it. This heel-trod isle
Fills with a vaster life throughout its length ;
Watch and be patient for a little while,
Till we shall rightly understand our strength ;
Palm boughs for you—no more of Amaranth.
You are the victors, you are the elect.
Blood, tears, and sufferings make us what we are ;
Lo, rises from the grave, as climbs a star,
A Nation mighty in its self-respect !





THE ST ISIDORE MANUSCRIPTS.

IN THE FRANCISCAN CONVENT, DUBLIN.

FROM Ireland of the four bright seas,
In troublous days these treasures came—
Through clouds—through fires—through
darknesses—

To Rome of immemorial name—
Rome of immeasurable fame.
The reddened hands of foes would rive
Each lovely growth of cloister, crypt—
Dim folio—yellow manuscript—
Where yet the glowing pigments live;
But a clear voice cried from Louvain:
“Give them to me, for they are mine!”
And so they sped across the main—
The Saints their guard, the ship their shrine.

Yet other days: and scroll and leaf
With fruit and foliage glistened o'er,
Found sanctuary, not too brief,
In thy dim halls St Isidore—
Where sandalled feet still tread the floor.
The halls where Barron, Hickey trod,
Where Fleming and where Harold wrought—
Where many a saint perfection sought,
Wept, laboured, prayed, and passed to God—

There, by the daylight, or the lamp,
The brown Franciscan bent above
Those pages rusted red for damp,
But priceless as profoundest love.

Yet later days : and he, the vile,
The foul, the doubly-blasted king—
Within whose court but syrens smile,
And hymns to Aphroditè ring;
Those jewels, void of cost, would fling
Broadcast upon a gaping world
That will not know, and never knew,
How many fires our flag passed through
Before its radiant folds were furled:
He would stretch forth destroying hand,
To filch the glories of our Race;
Thank God, the brave Franciscan band
Have saved us from this last disgrace.

For here in storied Dublin are
The scrolls, the trophies of a time,
Burnt in our fortunes like a star
Which, breaking in some rayless clime,
Makes one vast depth of dark sublime:
O'Donnell's writing, clear and sweet—
O'Neill's decisive, firm, and strong—
Fragments of that heroic song
To which the Irish heart kept beat,
Whilst yet our country, helmed and plumed,
Gave valiant challenge to her foes,
And over fields, by fortune doomed,
The sun of Hope, though clouded, rose.

Warrior, prelate, poet, sage,
Their glorious handicraft is here—

Echoes of that disastrous age
When Ireland, foiled on field and mere,
Held the old faith more dearly dear.
What banner rose, what standard fell,
What man proved false, what man stood true,
Through all these days of crimson hue—
These stained and mildewed pages tell.
From out these records breathes a past
That did not die in empty words,
But backed its purpose, stern and vast,
With flashing guns and clashing swords.

O'Donnell's heart is sick in Rome,
And here he writes his agonies:
His eyes are strained across the foam,
Whither, amid conflicting seas,
His castles take the morning breeze.
A lion chafing in his cage,
O'Neill protests, exhorts, commands;
He cannot burst the iron bands
That bind him helpless in an age
Which saw the wide world clothed in steel,
To champion warring rights and wrongs—
Which filled the Nations with the peal
Of long-resounding battle songs.

Luke Wadding writes in words that burn
With all the passionate desire
That thrilled his soul, when wasted—worn—
He saw his country's hopes expire,
In blood and ashes, storms and fire.
He loved her truly, served her well,
And when the cause for which he toiled
By cruel treacheries fell foiled,
Amid its ruins he, too, fell.

Great heart that broke in twain beneath
The cloudless, deep, Italian sky,
Thy city's and thy country's Faith
Embalm thy noble memory.

The fighting hand—the fearless hand—
The hand of dauntless Owen Roe !
With stately sweep, erect and grand,
The lines across the pages flow—
Each word direct as is a blow.
There is no Crown without a Cross :
If Ireland leaped with joy to see
Your swift career of victory,
That Ireland also wept your loss.
Peace to thine ashes, gallant chief,
No braver ever bared a sword,
Gone down amid a nation's grief—
By generations yet deplored.

Here, like a trumpet, clear and loud,
O'Queely's voice rings through the crash;
He will not see his country bowed,
While there is steel to smite and flash,
And flanks of battle barbs to lash.
O warrior prelate, would the men
Who sway us had thy courage now—
The thorns would fall from Ireland's brow,
And she would leap to life again.
What splendid death ! For Liberty
To fall in consecrating gore—
The broken Cross upon thy knee,
And at thy head the red claymore !

Look well on this—'twas Rothe who writ :
How deep and strong the writing runs—

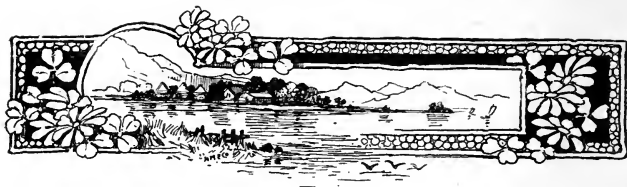
What tender grace, what gentle wit—
Mingled reproofs and benisons !
Kilkenny, thou had'st many sons
Who bore thy fame o'er land and sea,
And made thy name a household word
In wilds where foot had never stirred,
But none more resolute than he.
True Bishop, he served Ireland well,
When fell the cause Confederate,
And conquerors, inspired by hell,
Decreed us to a bloody fate.

Liber Hymnorum ! Beauteous book,
Grey with the glory born of time,
Dim leaves which the Franciscan took
At dewy eve, at early prime—
Even at midnight's measured chime—
And on them wrote, with pen devout,
The cries in which the saints of God
Adored the blessed path He trod,
When sorrows ringed Him round about.
Stand firm, dear Book, that all may see
That in the years which have no name,
Our country had a history,
And Europe echoed back her fame.

Rare psalters whose initials glow
With fairy fancies—birds and flowers—
Roses of everlasting blow
And blooms of never-fading bowers—
Blue lakes, green isles, and mystic towers !
O blessed be the monkish hands
Which filled each page with such sweet grace,
When earth for Learning found no place,
And war streamed red across the lands.

Fade never, but be monument
Of what the brave Franciscans did,
When battle shook the Continent,
And half the world in gloom lay hid.
Ireland shall treasure book and scroll;
And from their sacred leaves may rise
A newer and a mightier soul
To raise her nearer to the skies,
And win her grander destinies.
And Ireland never can forget
The loving men who through long years—
Sad centuries of silent tears—
Their seal upon these treasures set,
Guarding them for the brighter day
Which, be it far or close at hand,
Must pour inevitable ray
On this unconquerable land.





THE FLIGHT OF THE CELT.

FROM the lakes and shining inlands—
From the hilltops green and hoar;
Our broken race are flying
Down to the sea-lapped shore.
The deep before them, and behind
The land they'll tread no more.

Mothers and gentle maidens
Swarm in the crowded way,
Young sun-tanned peasants lithe and strong,
Old men bowed down and grey,
Hurrying, fleeing, panic-struck,
In the mighty glare of day.

And the hills look down upon them
With a gorgeous, tearful gloom,
And a shadow falls on the ancient fields
And breaks through the summer bloom,
The eclipse of a destiny—
The darkness of a doom.

The black ship in the harbour space
Rocks with the moaning tide,
Her sails against the rising blast
Are spreading fair and wide,
And out she sweeps across the tawn
Atlantic surge to ride.

Where do you sail, O Brothers,
Across the howling main?
Where do you flee, my Sisters,
With faces pale from pain?
Why leave ye Ireland in your wake—
The holy cross and plain?

Our steps are on the ocean's face,
Our ship bears to the west;
We are the fugitives of earth—
Of Providence the guest.
We seek a little land to dig,
A grave wherein to rest.

We give our foe our heritage,
And to him we bequeath,
The people's curse, that yet shall blast
His blood-empurpled wreath—
The hate that lives through centuries—
The wrath that breathes in death.

There are our homes where yonder stars
Are rising through the night,
The valleys where we've toiled and sung
'Twixt morn and even light,
Our shrines, our churches, and, O God,
Our churchyards bleached and white,

We go but to remember them
By foreign hill or wood ;
Our arms shall smite, our hearts shall pant
For vengeance for that feud—
The vengeance that a people crave
For persecuted blood.

Wherever by our common toil
The forest's heart is rent,
And cities fair shall raise their heads
And pierce the firmament,
Of cherished hate each stone shall be
A living monument.

By Irish firesides far away,
Amid the young and old,
The story of our bitter grief
At night time shall be told,
And eyes shall overflow with tears,
And cheeks grow moist and cold.

Then when the conflicts of the climes
Shall fall upon the earth,
Another race—an Irish race—
Shall spring to second birth,
Shall catch the bolt within its palm
And hurl its thunders forth.

And Babylon shall quake to see
The light within her ken,
Her harbours fired, her cities sacked,
Her legions in the pen,
And ringing in her ears the tramp
Of myriad hosts of men.

Laugh at it, scorn it, God above
Has watched us countless years,
We've held the faith through good and ill—
Our nationhood in tears.
We wait till in the clouded heavens
His flaming hand appears.

And shine it will when few expect
Across the starry space,
The tyrant and his victim then
Shall stand up face to face—
The Lord shall aid when we avenge
The wrongs that smite our race.





A SPINNING SONG.



Y love to fight the Saxon goes
And bravely shines his sword of steel,
A heron's feather decks his brows,
And a spur on either heel;
His steed is blacker than the sloe,
And fleeter than the falling star;
Amid the surging ranks he'll go
And shout for joy of war.

Tinkle, twinkle, pretty spindle, let the white wool drift
and dwindle,

Oh! we weave a damask doublet for my love's coat
of steel.

Hark! the timid, turning treadle crooning soft, old-
fashioned ditties

To the low, slow murmur of the brown round wheel.

My love is pledged to Ireland's fight;
My love would die for Ireland's weal,
To win her back her ancient right,
And make her foemen reel.

Oh, close I'll clasp him to my breast
When homeward from the war he comes;
The fires shall light the mountain's crest,
The valley peal with drums.

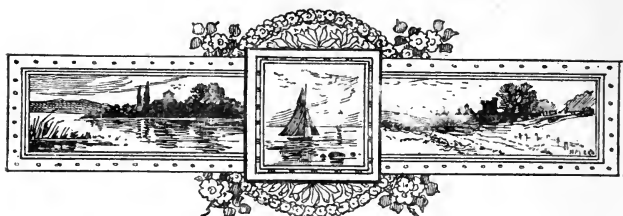
Tinkle, twinkle, pretty spindle, let the white wool drift
and dwindle,

Oh! we weave a damask doublet for my love's coat
of steel.

Hark! the timid, turning treadle crooning, soft, old-
fashioned ditties

To the low, slow murmur of the brown round wheel.





LIMERICK TOWN.



HERE I've got you, Philip Desmond, standing in
the market-place,
'Mid the farmers and the corn sacks, and the
hay in either space,
Near the fruit stalls, and the women knitting socks and
selling lace.

There is High Street up the hillside, twenty shops on
either side,
Queer, old-fashioned, dusky High Street, here so narrow,
there so wide,
Whips and harness, saddles, signboards, hanging out in
quiet pride.

Up and down the noisy highway, how the market
people go!
Country girls in Turkey kerchiefs—poppies moving to
and fro—
Frieze-clad fathers, great in buttons, brass and watch-
seals all a-show.

Merry, merry are their voices, Philip Desmond, unto
me,
Dear the mellow Munster accent, with its intermittent
glee ;
Dear the blue cloaks, and the grey coats, things I long
have longed to see.

Even the curses, adjurations, in my senses sound like
rhyme,
And the great, rough-throated laughter of that peasant
in his prime,
Winking from the grassbound cart-shaft, brings me back
the other time.

Not a soul, observe you, knows me, not a friend a hand
will yield,
Would they know, if to the landmarks all around them
I appealed?
Know me! If I died this minute, dig for me the Potter's
field?

Bricks wan grey, and memories greyer, and our faces
somehow pass
Like reflections from the surface of a sudden darkened
glass.
Live you do, but as a unit of the undistinguished mass.

"Pshaw! you're prosy." Am I prosy? Mark you then
this sunward flight:
I have seen this street and roof tops ambered in the
morning's light,
Golden in the deep of noonday, crimson on the marge of
night.

Continents of gorgeous cloudland, argosies of blue and
flame,
With the sea-wind's even pressure, o'er this roaring
faubourg came.
This is fine supernal nonsense. Look, it puts my cheek
to shame.

Come, I want a storm of gossip, pleasant jests and ancient
chat;
At that dusky doorway yonder my grandfather smoked
and sat,
Tendrils of the wind-blown clover sticking in his broad-
leafed hat.

There he sat and read the paper. Fancy I recall him
now!
All the shadow of the house front slanting up from knee
to brow;
Critic he of far convulsions, keen-eyed judge of sheep and
cow.

Now he lives in God's good judgments. Ah, 'twas
much he thought of me,
Laughing gravely at my questions, as I sat upon his
knee—
As I trifled with his watch seal, red carbuncle fair to
see.

Ancient house, that held my father, all are gone beyond
recall.
There's where Uncle Michael painted flower-pots on the
parlour wall,
There's where Nannie, best of she-goats, munched her
hay and had her stall.

Many a night from race and market down this street six
brothers strode,
Finer, blither, truer fellows never barred a country
road,
Shouting, wheeling, fighting, scorning watchman's law
and borough code.

Hither, with my hand in her hand, came my mother
many a day,
She, the old man's pet and darling, at his side or far
away,
And her chair was near the window, half in square and
half in bay.

Oh, my mother, my pure-hearted, dear to me as child and
wife,
Ever earnest, ever toilsome in this quick, unresting
strife,
Ever working out the mission of a silent, noble life.

Do I love you? Can you ask me? Do I love you,
mother mine?
Love you! yes, while God exists, and while His sun and
moon shall shine.
I was yours, O sweet, bright darling; in the heavens
I shall be thine.

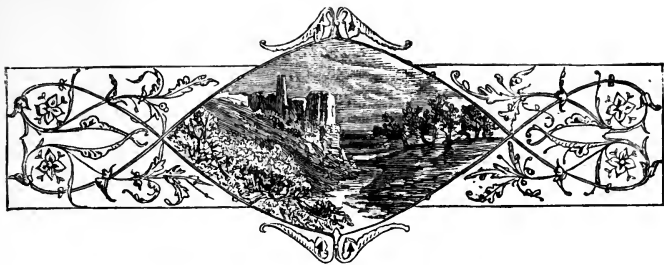
If I write this rhyming gossip all about the ancient
street,
'Tis because the very footpaths were made blessed by
your feet.
Dear, pale mother! writing of you, how my heart and
pulses beat!

Beat and beat with warm convulsions, and my eyes are
thick with tears,
And your low song by my cradle sounds again within
my ears.
Here's the highway, which you trod once, I thrice filled
with childish fears.

Rolled the waggons, swore the carters, outside in the
crowded street,
Horses reared, and cattle stumbled, dogs barked high
from loads of wheat;
But inside the room was pleasant, and the air with
thyme was sweet.

Others now are in their places, honest folk who know us
not;
Do I chafe at the transition? Philip, 'tis the common
lot—
Do your duty, live your lifetime, say your prayers, and
be forgot.





A TRAITOR.



knew him well; keen witted, sly,
Thin lipped, with an eternal sneer
Wreathing his mouth; a lustrous eye,
Deep, passionate, but insincere.

Man of all moods; a misanthrope
At least in brain if not in heart—
His sole ambition—his one hope
To hurl the lance or shoot the dart
Of slaying satire; for his eyes,
Abhorring brightness, loved to dwell
Where all the hues of Paradise
Were blotted by the dusk of hell.

He had kind moments, when some rays
Of better nature shone, despite
His frozen looks and guarded ways,
And dazzled with their tender light.

Woman he loved not; so he said
For her, within his soul inurned
Contempt, by low experience bred,
Volcanic like, upheaved and burned.

Yet, sometimes he was known to waste
An hour in flirting, exquisite
With compliments demurely chaste
And mellowed gleams of icy wit.
Damascus steel was blunt beside
His cold, sarcastic, cautious tongue,
Which parried with a fencer's pride,
With logic from perversion wrung.
Yet he was "moral," honest, bold ;
Twice on a Sunday went to church ;
And, though possessed of little gold,
Would leave his offering in the porch.
And hear the sermon wide-awake
With solid stare ; whilst all the pews
Around him, for devotion's sake,
Were steeped in soporific dews.
He had few friends. Well, I was one,
And loved him first ; his trifling mood
To me was genial, fully grown,
And healthy with arterial blood.
He took the world, its wants and cares,
With unassumed indifference ;
Mimicked its follies, mocked its airs
With humour in its intense sense.
Then love resolved itself to hate—
I could not trust in one who saw
In gambling losses certain fate,
But in God's works no perfect law.
Who always laboured broad and deep,
To turn the darkest side of life
And shun the bright, that he might keep,
With Providence unceasing strife.

Years grew on him ; and he was white ;
I met him oft in lane and street
Creeping through the imperfect light
With bended head and failing feet.

Age froze the sneer upon his lips
To grinning marble ; bleared and dim
His full orb'd eyes, in foul eclipse,
Grew heavy, melancholy, dim.

At last, one day, he caught my hand
And said, " Do you forget me, friend ?
We plough the earth, we sow the land,
But God alone foresees the end.

He who loves passion in his youth,
Conserves no energy for age :
God's laws are built on triple truth,
And measured with unerring gauge.

He thriveth best who humbly sees
God's works with reverent gratitude ;
He thriveth least whose faculties
Find cracks and flaws in all that's good.

Guess you the moral." So I did,
And homeward as my steps I bent
Hoped that some gracious thought lay hid
Like diamond in the sediment

Of his spent life—some sunset wind
Had from his mind a cloud unrolled
Whose black skirts trailing far behind
Turned to the heavens their fading gold.



THE DANCING MASTER.



YOU know me well, Tim Monoyhan—
And that's my proud, undoubted name ;
I'm fond—who's not ?—of merry scenes ;
And don't despise a taste of fame.

For fame is sweet, and very dear,
I'd sooner break a jig than lance,
And what in heaven's name excels
A free and merry Irish dance ?

Now, as I've said, my name is Tim,
The boys take liberties with me ;
They like my steps, they praise my style,
And love my fiddle's screaming glee.
The girls as well admire my notes
When fiddle tunes their heels entrance ;
But through the world there's nothing like
The Scotch reel and the Irish dance.

Ah, the old days ! We then had wakes,
Or marriages—'twas all the same,
For whether death or life no power
The spirit of our race could tame.
Bad as the times, the boy Celt loved
The forfeit and the maiden's glance ;
Pha ! talk of all new-fangled treats,
There's nothing like the Irish dance.

There's Peggy Mead—a year ago
To see her walk and so misuse
Her pretty ankles, faith you'd think
She was first cousin to a goose.
I neatly took her case in hand,
Just as the masters do in France ;
And, by my soul, she showed her friends
There's nothing like the Irish dance.

And look at Paddy Whelan there,
He's just the boy to work by halves,
Who ever looking at him thinks
I'd put some genius in his calves ?
God bless you, but you see I did,
He beats the ladies at the Manse,
And, rising on his toes, declares,
There's nothing like the Irish dance.

'Tis well I love in some old barn,
Well, just as August tempers June,
To stride a heap of reeds and play
Some lively, gay old Irish tune,
To see the boys and girls go round,
Their stout brogues working dissonance,
And shout up from my heart of hearts,
There's nothing like the Irish dance.

Well, here's to Ireland, this new year,
God bless her, may she never die
While the twig moults, while the bird sings,
Or rain makes noise on grass or sky.
Give me her manhood true and straight,
Give me her maidens' smiling glance,
Ay, faith, and give me after these
The Muses' gift, our Irish dance.



ON THE RAMPART: LIMERICK.

CHEERILY rings the boatman's song
Across the dark-brown water :
His mast is slant, his sail is strong,
His hold is red with slaughter—
With beeves that cropped the fields of Glynn,
And sheep that pricked their meadows,
Until the sunset-cry trooped in
The cattle from the shadows.
He holds the foam-washed tiller loose,
And hums a country ditty;
For, under clouds of gold, turned puce,
Gleam harbour, mole, and city.
O town of manhood, maidenhood,
By thee the Shannon flashes—
There Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

St Mary's, in the evening air,
Springs up austere and olden;
Two sides its steeple grey and bare,
Two sides with sunset golden.

The bells roll out, the bells roll back,
For lusty knaves are ringing;
Deep in the chancel, red and black,
The white-robed boys are singing.
The sexton loiters by the gate
With eyes more blue than hyssop,
A black-green skull-cap on his pate,
And all his mouth a-gossip.
This is the town beside the flood—
The walls the Shannon washes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

The streets are quaint, red-bricked, antique,
The topmost storeys curving,
With, here and there, a slated leak,
Through which the light falls swerving.
The angry sudden light falls down
On path and middle parquet,
On shapes, weird as the ancient town,
And faces fresh for market,
They shout, they chatter, disappear,
Like imps that shake the valance
At midnight, when the clock ticks queer,
And time has lost its balance.
This is the town beside the flood
Which past its bastions dashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

Oh, how they talk, brown country folk,
Their chatter many-mooded,
With eyes that laugh for equivoque,
And heads in kerchiefs snooded !

Such jests, such jokes, whose plastic mirth
But Heine could determine—
The portents of the latest birth,
The point of Sunday's sermon ;
The late rains, and the previous drouth,
How oats were growing stunted,
How keels fetched higher prices, south,
And Captain Watson hunted.
This is the town beside the flood
Whose wave with memories flashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

How thick with life the Irish town,
Dear grey and battered portress
That laid all save her honour down,
To save the fire-ringed fortress.
Here Sarsfield stood, here lowered the flag
That symbolised the people—
A riddled rag, a bloody rag,
Plucked from St Mary's steeple.
Thick are the walls the women lined
With courage worthy Roman,
When armed with hate sublime, if blind,
They scourged the headlong foeman.
This is the town beside the flood
That round its ramparts flashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.

This part is mine : to live divorced
Where foul November gathers,
With other sons of thine dispersed,
Brave city of my fathers.

To gaze on rivers not mine own,
And nurse a wasting longing,
Where Babylon, with trumpets blown,
South, north, east, west, comes thronging.
To hear distinctly, if afar,
The voices of thy people—
To hear through crepitating jar
The sweet bells of thy steeple.
To love the town, the hill, the wood,
The Shannon's stormful flashes,
Where Freedom's seed was sown in blood,
To blossom into ashes.





*THE FOUNDING OF THE MONASTERY
OF DONEGAL.*

A.D. 1474.



HEY chose the monastery's site
Upon a bluff above the bay:
Beside the Esk streamed blue and bright,
By wooded deeps and castles grey,
Into the fierce Atlantic spray.
From the tall steep one saw the ships
Far off and dim, like clouds in calm,
When breathes the south with dew-blown lips
From isles remote of spice and balm.

Far inland stretched a land of rest,
Of violet hills and yellow vales,
Where yet the eagle held his nest,
White-crusted by the western gales
That chafed the wave and swelled the sails
Of tall barks looming through the haze,
And pressing harbourward, at night
The lamp at masthead half-ablaze—
A sinking, rising, restless light.

It was the climate of Tir-Hugh—
Land of a race that held its own,
While Ireland, unto Ireland true,
Refused, if beaten, to lie prone,
Or see its manhood overthrown.
There Irish law held sovereign force,
There Celtic lore and minstrelsy;
The people feared no foreign curse—
They loved their princes and were free.

So on this bluff of Donegal
The trench was dug with pick and spade,
And true against the eastern wall
The square foundation stone was laid,
Enwreathed with flowers in curious braid.
Its socket held the founder's name,
The dear name of St Francis, too;
No battle ever fetched thee fame
As did that festival, Tir-Hugh.

The brown Franciscans stood around,
The breviary in each thin hand,
Pealing above the holy ground
That litany of martyrs grand
Whose voice is heard in every land.
And when the final prayer was said,
And tears stood in the princes' eyes,
They waved their sparths 'twixt heel and head,
And shook the seaboard with their cries.

Day after day it slowly rose,
That monastery by the sea,
Graceful and delicate as snows
That drop from the bent hazel tree
Whilst yet the winter is to be.

A fairy charm possessed the stone,
So perfect its fantastic mould;
And ere the tower had fully grown
The sea moss hid its base in gold.

Through tangled columned groups the sun
Poured east or west upon the pave,
Red as a martyr's orison,
Kneeling beside his open grave,
And at his head the slaying glaive.
The slender shafts that propped the roof
In purple twilights sprang half-hid,
To sun, and star, and planet proof,
As is the core of pyramid.

Last leaped the bell-tower square and grey—
St Francis' finger pointing high
To that fair world beyond the day,
To God and His immensity,
Type of the faith that cannot die!
Last came the bells, whose voices are
Echoes of what the world must dree—
Reflections of another star
Whose light is immortality.





AN INTERVIEW.



AND you've just come from Ireland ; that's
your plea
For all those sickening substances of
thought,
Steeped in your brain, a jelly-fish at sea
Or with the limpets blue in rock-craft caught,
You left us when your brain was overwrought
By the slow processes of decimals,
And piling on interminable nought,
Soul rises, but sense wavers, staggers, falls,

Down to a wholly terminable degree,
Well, not of meanness ; for, I like you yet,
Spite of your office and its pageantry,
And your poor goose-quill, never dry, nor wet.
That quill which time, experience, will not whet,
But go on jargoning from base to top,
Letting who will be waiting on who'll let,
With here and there the dumb official stop.

You colour! Oh, don't mind it; you've come back
From Limerick, and watched the Shannon pour
Its salmon-threaded waters, track on track
Round many a bending pause of weir and shore,
And trodden beach, that raves for evermore;
By castled ruins, red with leaves, like wine,
And lakes that simmer in the moonlight frore;
And here you come and babble of the Rhine.

You tell me, and I laugh, of Lurlie's rock—
That emerald mountain stooping to the wave—
What of Doonass—the hurrying rush, the shock,
Like hosts embattled—tangled shield and glaive?
The tost plume sinking, and not one to save.
All this is vulgar to your alien ears,
You like a finer music—something new—
A ghastly catalogue of precious tears,
A moon half rising, and a world of blue.

Well, have it; and still curl your lip august
At Dublin, Dublin people, Dublin ways;
Of course you've worn off all the ancient rust
Of poverty, and sad declining days,
When first a shilling set your eyes ablaze.
I love the Providence which keeping time—
Change after change, as waters keep their hue,
And, meditating one Supreme Sublime,
Consummated its final task in you.

You don't love Ireland; all the Race is coarse,
You, with your toothpick, sitting where you are
(From last night's orgie rather bleared and hoarse)
Loom like a fog that clings to some still star
Apparent; when the fen and mist's at war.

“And, oh! she had such well-bred English ways!”

You idiot! It does your sneak's heart good,
Half sofa-wise to sit, and leer, and gaze,
And dream comparisons of rival blood.

And Limerick, and Dublin, as you think,
Are vulgar, prejudiced—you don't see there,
Betwixt the social class the social link,
The pure maids mixing with the syren's stare,
Nor that astute development of hair
Shorn off some convict. Ah, your taste is fine—
A rolling meteor tost by fouler wind,
London, as you praise it, is divine,
And the loved city of my heart behind.

Well, go, and babble; there are fools to hear;
But give me back that sweet, calm, Limerick maid,
Who passed the phantom of a lovely fear,
By our old casement, bright but still decayed,
Whilst my pure mother knitted in the shade
Of the bow-ivy. There is London town,
Glutted with light and * * * but you know.
Here, you purveyor of that King and Crown,
Glasses for two—a cab for Pimlico.





JOHN MITCHEL.

TO fifty different idols set
In ludicrous and grimmest pomp—
Within the blatant temple's womb,
Each forehead with its backward plume,
Gradating down from white to jet;
Sounds the loud praise of harp and tromp.

You like him of the barricade,
Whose life above its worth is priced,
The foulest creature in the sun,
Whom no man thrusts a blow upon;
I hate the hound whom chance has made
To spit in the pale face of Christ.

And hating him, and loving you,
John Mitchel, far away from me,
(Even as I love John Martin's self,
Proud hater of the grasping Guelph,)
My faith is: you are good and true,
A light in our black history.

But why to that heroic breast
Should conscience-shamed Mazzini cling?
A thousand great and wise as he,
Pant for the dear intimacy;
To share the storm of thy unrest,
To hail thee, though uncrowned, a king.

Your soul meant courage, and the fire
Of all your longings, thoughts desired,
Not Ireland begging in the dust
With famished lips and pity's crust,
But revolution, boy and sire,
Through heaven, and earth, and sea suspired.

I, toiling in these barren days
Of fatal meanness, pit 'gainst truth,
Think of the gallant master hand,
That all but half redeemed the land.
I see you through opposing haze
Chief and ideal of my youth.

The earnest look, the Cyclop brow,
The iron meaning of the face;
The tost locks crowning both emprise,
The still calm passion of the eyes;
The figure bent a little low,
But with a strong imperious grace.

'Tis thus they tell me that you looked—
Imagination paints it all;
Granted that we shall ne'er lock hands
Across the sea-disparted lands.
Howe'er decrees of Fate be booked,
The visioned future will not pall.

It shall not—when the curse and blame
Were on your head, when fools and knaves
Spoke of John Mitchel's treachery,
And bit the lip and winked the eye ;
My cheek flung out the banner shame,
My tongue replied to half the slaves.

Ah ! this was twenty years ago,
And I had chestnuts in my hair,
And in my heart a subtler thought
Than that which fact and time have wrought
Out of persistent action's glow—
But you, no Past has made unfair,

But step by step has spiritualised,
Above the howl of creed and sect,
The petty slanderer of the shop,
The hell where foul opinions drop,
In their own foulness crystalised,
To sprawl a-gloze on intellect ;

To dash with elemental spume,
The great heart, the pure character,
Of one whose vigorous, true strife
Has prematurely round his life
Dipt the inevitable gloom,
Which no wind of the earth can stir.

Others have fallen, hoarded gold,
Minted and trafficked treachery ;
And at thy feet, O thrice August,
They grope for pardon in the dust ;
They are too squalid, waxing old—
No such damnation waits on thee.

For to the last, the very last,
I hear that brave, uplifted voice,
Crying in exile, smote, alone,
Crying as cried the Baptist John,
Beneath a heaven of exile vast,
And my soul struggles to rejoice.

'Tis comforting when time is dark,
And hours are racked with hopeless pain,
That one survivor of the fight
Should battle for the Nation's Right,
Leaving his sovereign, radiant mark
On tyranny's protracted reign.

They bid you, Mitchel, shun the shore
Within whose cirques of surge repose,
Each in its shroud of green or red,
The bones of no inglorious dead.
Ah! they call to you evermore,
Great spirit blent of palm and rose.

See Ireland through the hideous bars,
The grates of fire that round her in;
Look at our Ireland, all but dead,
Prostrate and disinherited:
Was this below Antarctic stars
The dream you dreamt, the end you'd win?

Lightning and thunder, and the gloom
Of piling ages, wrongs of fate,
Bellow about her as she sleeps,
In troubled calms of middle deeps,
The vestures of the tides her tomb—
Ay, she, like you, is desolate.

Despair not ; would 'twere mine to give
The chrism of patience, wove of faith,
John Mitchel, you indeed would be
Crowned chief of my idolatry;
No truer man deserves to live,
None other looked less blanched at Death





AN AUSTRALIAN MESSAGE.

CHRISTMAS.



GOOD friends, couched deep in summer shade, and
longing for the breeze from sea,
When, up the dark, the Southern Cross around
the Pole shall circle free,
With hanging pears our walls run red, our gables with
the grape's black blue,
The melons burst beneath our tread, the thirsty grasses
yearn for dew;
And yet there's snow,
And fireside glow,
Or drifting sleet rolled down the vale,
In that far land
Where bravely stand
The glorious children of the Gael.

We've fetched their faith across the waves—a bright
unyielding heritage;
We've brought dear memories of home—the legend and
the teeming page;

The dark hair and blue eyes are here—the Irish jest,
the Irish smile—

The woman's sanctity which makes a paradise of our
green isle.

The Austral sun
Which blazes on
Our flag makes not its emerald pale;
Here's, far and near,
With prayer sincere,
The glorious children of the Gael.

In stormy days, in patient pain, and little heeding gain
or loss,

We've raised our Nation's ensign high beneath the
shining Southern Cross.

Our clustered spires to heaven aspire, our altars burn
amid the wild,

And, thanks unto the Lord above, we've kept our
manhood undefiled.

In God's good hour
Our faith shall flower,
And future bards recount the tale
Of them who thought,
And them who wrought—
The glorious children of the Gael.

'Tis noonday. Lo! the burning sun along the dusty
pastures shines

The sheep are drowsy on the slope, the bees are silent
near the vines;

The far-off ocean gleams like steel, the foam lies cream-
ing on the strand,

And scarce a shadow floats across the white, abandoned
leagues of sand.

Here's to the sky
That tenderly
Bends over Irish hill and vale,
And shields to-night
With stormy light
The glorious children of the Gael !

Ho ! 'tis a bark, with dusk sails furled, that forges
towards the harbour's mouth ;
She brings us shamrocks, bred afar, to blossom in the
friendly south,
And there are letters scented with the bog-oak and the
turf of home,
And bits of palm, and holly sprays, and ivy tendrils
black with bloom.

God bless the bark
Which through the dark,
And lightnings, intershot with hail,
Brings gifts so dear
To crown and cheer
The glorious children of the Gael !

O darling Ireland ! from those wastes our hearts, our
sighs, go back to thee ;
We hear the wailing of thy harp—thy coronach—on land
and sea.
Despair not : never tribe or race, through all the empires
vast and broad,
Shall sing the requiem of one so perilously true to God.
O bleeding, worn,
O crushed and torn,
O crownless lady, pure and pale !
'Twixt wave and plain
Thou yet shalt reign
Above the children of the Gael.



REMINISCENCES OF A DAY.

WICKLOW.



DIM delicious heaven of dreams—
The land of boyhood's dewy glow—
Again I hear your torrent streams
Through purple gorge and valley flow,
Whilst fresh the mountain breezes blow.
Above the air smites sharp and clear—
The silent lucent spring it chills—
But underneath, moves warm amidst
The bases of the hills.

With scalps fire-charged, or violet,
The grim peaks pierce the open sky;
There may the storm at midnight fret
Its strength in moans of agony,
Whilst tempest-shaped the clouds roll by
Pale lightnings leap from scar to scar,
Between the hurtlings of the rains,
And four-fold thunders peal throughout
The loud rejoicing glens.

But not to-night, O lovely land,
 Bear'st thou the colour of the storm ;
 The wind that fans my cheek is bland
 And delicate, and sweet, and warm.
 No wracks portending ill deform
 The starry azure of those skies,
 Where Dian flames a fiery crest,
 Bernice's hair across the north—
 Orion down the west.

The cloud that helms the mountain's brow,
 The cataract that leaps and cries,
 Have long-lost meanings—voices—now
 For manhood's wakened ears and eyes.
 Forbid it God I should despise
 The other meanings, long since lost
 'Mid the thronged cities' smoking fold—
 Vague intimations that made time
 A very time of Gold.

Here, 'mid the mountains and the mists,
 I as a child, with hair grown grey,
 Tired of the ever widening lists—
 Sick of unresting fray and fray,
 Yet without that obscure decay
 Which chills the sources of the heart,
 And blasts the flowers of simple joy,
 Come, in the rainbow lights to dance,
 And feel I'm still a boy.

I know the years have wrought me wrong,
 And I have wronged myself beside ;
 Degenerate speech, degenerate song,
 Dinned in my ears from morningtide—
 The shame I shun, yet must abide—

Have smitten me ; yet here I am
 'Midst mountains lately white with snows :
They nurse the storm upon their tops,
 And in their heart, the rose.

The violet is at my feet—
 The slender flower of glorious blue ;
The daisy, parti-coloured, sweet,
 Gives the hill grass a richer hue,
 The rough furze lights its fires anew.
Here hurled the rain, here rolled the storm ;
 Each did its worst—each wrought its part—
'Twas Nature's share—shall I not have
 Also a fresh, new heart ?

Far from the cities, far from streets—
 Far from the cries of suffering wrongs,
Away from scenes where Commerce beats
 Its praises upon iron gongs,
 How sweet to listen to the songs
Which tell me, spite of all despairs,
 The Holy Land that gave me birth
Shall yet rise up, and reign and rule
 O'er her own seas and earth.

Shout out that hope, you mountain spires—
 Shout it, deep gorge and lake profound ;
Shout it, you pine slopes, red with fires—
 Return me no uncertain sound.
 Give—were it my heart's latest bound—
That hope to breathe upon the wave
 Which soon shall carry me away,
Far from the sharp-contrasted lights
 Of Irish night and day.

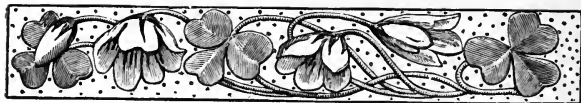
O friend of radiant, lucent mind,
 And boundless charity of heart,*
 As through the hills we climb and wind—
 See the red deer leap up and start
 Out in the sun—that we must part
 Flings sadness on this tender morn—
 A lengthening shadow on the path,
 That flows in curious maze between
 The wild wood and the rath.

I see the stars above the Alp
 Of Bendhu's mighty presence rise ;
 They scale his chest—they crown his scalp-
 They clothe him with a pale sunrise :
 I gaze—and tears are in my eyes.
 The morning flows across the wild,
 The free bird down the valley slips—
 I listen to its shrill, sweet cry,
 And songs are on my lips.

But lo, once more the evening comes,
 And shadows deepen down the wold,
 The distant peaks take purpler glooms,
 And through Imaile's entangled fold
 Blazes the sun—a disk of gold.
 O God of Peace, the heavens are near
 The stars in shining millions brood ;
 Thy calm has fallen on my soul,
 And on this solitude !

* Rev. C. P. Meehan.





THE FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK.



MY boy had dreamt, 'twixt day and night,
When the woods make mournful rune,
(The ash leaves changing green and white,
Below the slowly waning moon ;)
At first there came a triumph tune,
Then shouts of hosts from fell and field,
Next flashed the brows of warrior men,
The Four-Leaved Shamrock on each shield.

Swift from that deep, sweet sleep he sprung—
Day from the mighty east unrolled,
The forest top, with cloud o'erhung,
Had all its shafts transfixed with gold,
And purple lightnings manifold ;
“ O Four-Leaved Shamrock, radiant prize,
Ere darkness rounds the waking world
Thy beauty shall delight these eyes.

“ Once thou art mine, a palace roof
With battlement and swinging vane

From every vale shall gleam aloof ;
Earth shall rejoice in plenteous rain ;
The wastes shall burst their hearts for grain,
The rose take root in marsh and fen,
And through dear Ireland shall be heard—
The songs of happy husbandmen.”

All day the mountain’s wasted side,
Was trodden by his aching feet,
The strong sun, in its midmost pride,
On his fair head fierce splendours beat—
The toil was brave, the purpose sweet—
And so from hill to hill he passed,
Till, on the empty shore of heaven,
The moon again stood white and ghast.

No Four-Leaved Shamrock on his way—
Not that great joy, but in his hand,
Crusted with dew, and hacked from fray,
An immemorial Irish Brand !
He found it where the level land
Through pastures ran by many a path,
Amid the clustering hazel trees,
And in the mid grass of the rath.

The poplars shook above his head,
The sloe tree waved its blossomed crest ;
Though hope was disinherited,
And sorrow was his heart’s sole guest,
There was beatitude in rest.
He laid the sword across his knees,
And watched the great clouds sail along,
Wind-piloted through darkening seas.

“ Despirest thou ? ” a clear voice said :
“ What thou desirest thou hast found.”

He started from the green-mossed bed,
As starts a steed at battle's sound ;
The air grew luminous around—
The bright air dazed his wondering eyes,
She stood before him, Beautiful,
Of Fairy Land, or Paradise !

Oh, lovely vision ! the round throat,
The cheek, a music in its bloom !
The sundered locks that tost afloat,
As sways the autumn-goldened broom,
And in her eyes such violet gloom !
'Twas Erinn, Mother of our Race,
'Twas Ireland from the Land of Eld,
The sweet wild sorrow in her face.

And low he humbled him, whilst she :
“ The Four-Leaved Shamrock is thy blade—
The crossguard points and hilt make three
Of the brave leaves that never fade ;
The sword's point is the fourth, when laid
Straight at the vile oppressor's throat ;
Take thou the symbol in thy grasp
And smite as thy forefathers smote.”

And out he rushed that awful day,
When Hugh O'Donnell crushed the Red ;
His hand flashed lightnings through the fray
His arm to certain triumph led.
He fell the topmost of the dead—
He fell our freedom to restore—
He fell, my boy, my life, my pride ;
O Christ, that I had twenty more !



OUR FAITH—OUR FATHERLAND.

IRELAND, that sittest by the shores of Time—
Watching the Nation's sunrise—on thy lips
Hovers the gospel of a faith sublime,
Conserved through blight and blast and foul
eclipse.

Great, glorious mother! when the awful night
Brooded o'er Europe with portentous ills,
Thy brow was lifted to the morning light—
Thy lamp was shining on eternal hills.

Forth rang the clarion voice, and at its call
The blinded peoples gathered to thy feet;
From the remotest east to savage Gaul
The tramp of pilgrims through the midnight beat,
And they beheld thee crowned upon the sea—
A perfect Paradise of perfect bloom—
The Pharos of the west, whose brilliancy
Blazed like a star amid the ocean gloom.

Then close beside the spectral pillar-tower
The holy shrines were builded unto God;
Thy soul expanded into fruit and flower,
Inheritance of peace blessed each abode;

And from the morning watches till the sun
Sank in Hy Brasil, firing the vast dome,
Up swelled the myriad-voiced, sweet orison
From the green altar burning on the foam.

There was a clash of weapons in the air—
Ruin of peace and seasonable good ;
And, flanked by gallant natures, everywhere
The green flag staggered over fields of blood.
The Norman steed was stabled in thy fanes,
The Norman bugles rang upon the heath ;
Thy children bared their hearts and spurned their chains,
And sealed their glorious constancy in death.

Yes, Liberty was lost—her cause betrayed—
Stabbed in Christ's presence by unholy hands ;
Through the grey ages the remorseless blade
Hewed down the bravest of thy valiant bands.
But where the cross was lifted, at the sign
The baffled multitudes resistless rose,
Swept the long war-plains in unbroken line,
And dealt the debt of vengeance on thy foes.

O holy faith—God's best inheritance !
Bulwarked by thee, our Mother need not fear ;
O'Donnell loved thee when his eagle glance
Was muffled in death's blinding atmosphere ;
And the great chieftain of Blackwater heard
Thy voice, when, broken with the ills of years,
In mighty Rome he broke his conquered sword,
And clasped thy Cross in penitence and tears.

“Our Faith—Our Fatherland !” Our God—Our Race !
If rise—as rise we must—erect and free,
That battle cry must pierce the fighting space
From shore to utmost shore—from sea to sea.

When the vile power that grips us shall be smote,
Wherever havoc rolls and blood is spilt,
That cry must thunder from the cannon's throat—
The Cross must glitter on the falchion's hilt.

Vain may the prophet be who, looking back
Into the vanished years' chaotic gloom,
Dreams that he sees upon their rearward track
Signs, deep interpreters of days to come.
But the world's story is a gangrened lie ;
God's promises must falsify our trust
If we shall fail to crush this tyranny
And stamp its cancerous carcase in the dust.

Ireland, bright Motherland, where'er the day
Sinks or upsoars around this reeling earth,
Thy children multiply, or, dying grey,
Breathe thy dear name beside a foreign hearth.
In Babylon no willow bears their lyres :
'Tis theirs to toil, to sweat, to civilise—
To guard the flames of consecrated fires,
And wait the omens looming through the skies.

And whereso'er the empire's morning drum
Beats through the sunrise, million hearts awake
To call thee Mother—Inspiration—Home—
All holy names that sanctity can take.
Lean 'gainst the Cross, and keep thy torch alight ;
The past behind is drear and desolate,
But thine eyes keep a revelation bright—
The golden future destined for thy fate.





*TOMBS IN THE CHURCH OF MONTORIO,
ON THE JANICULUM.*

[Heic Jacent O'Nealivs, Baro De Dvngannon, Magni Hugonis Felivs, Et O'Donnel, Comes De Tyrconnel, qvi contra hæreticos in Hybernia multos annos certervnt.—MDCVIII.]



ALL natural things in balance lie,
Adjustment fair of earth and sky,
And their belongings. Thunders bring
The red life from the heart of spring;
Thence summer, and the golden wane
That comes with harvest when each field,
Crimsoned with weeds, like fiery rain,
Flames like a newly forgèd shield.
All things come true, in some dim sense,
Held good by absolute Providence.
Inquire not: Here you sleep at last—
Sleeping, it may be face to face,
Right glorious leaders of our race,
Of faith profound, of purpose vast.
Around, above, this glittering dome
Soars the majestic bulk of Rome;
This marble pave, this double cell
Enshrines you, and contents you well.

Better it were the twain should lie
On some wild bluff of Donegal,
The sea below in mutiny,
The terrible heaven over all.
God wills and willed it shall not be.
Here is no rave of wind or sea.
Peace, incense, and the vesper psalm ;
The sob, the penitential groan ;
The lurid light, the dripping stone—
The earth's eternity of calm.

Sleep on, stern souls, 'twere wrong to shake
Your ashes—bid the dead awake,
To bitter welcome. Ireland lies
Under the heels of enemies.
So has she lain since that curst day
That saw your good ship fly the land ;
Since Ulster's proud and strong array
Dwindled to fragments, band by band.
And you two wept in leaving her
(Chased through the seas by Chichester.)
Still buoyed with hope to find abroad
Aid to prostrate our ancient foe,
And to lay wall and rampart low,
And hear the saints in heaven applaud.

It came not, and in regal Rome
Died the O'Donnell, sick for home.
Not all the pomp the city boasts
Consoled him for his native coasts.
Here Art's sublimed ; but Nature there
His heart, his passions satisfied ;
The forest depth, the delicate air
Were with his inmost soul allied.

So hoping, doubting went the days,
And tired at heart of time's delays,
He closed his eyes in Christ our Lord.

No truer man had nobler birth,
No braver soldier trod the earth,
With pitying or destroying sword.

And thou, O'Neill, Lord of Revolt,
Battle's impetuous thunderbolt.
Cliff-flinger, at whose name of might
The bronzed cheeks of the Pale turned white.
Dost thou lie here? And Ireland bleeds

Her virgin life through every pore !
Great chief in unexampled deeds,

We need thy smiting arm once more.
Rest, rest ! the glory of thy life
Shines like tradition on the strife
Which Ireland wages hour by hour,
Patient yet daring for the best,
And growing up, as worlds attest,
To freedom, majesty, and power.





THE GREEN GIFT.



JUST twenty years through spring have blown
Since, on one shining Patrick's Day,
A dear, far comrade sent to me,
Across the yeasty leagues of sea,
Through surge and wind, to Canada,
A letter rudely scribbled o'er
With little of the penman's art,
Freighted with songs, and—what is more—
An Irish shamrock in its heart.

I kissed it twenty—fifty times,
The delicate and flowerless spray;
And Limerick and its castled skies
Rose up distinct before my eyes,
Under the heaven of Canada.
I saw the Shannon westward run,
The hills of Clare fade off in blue,
The glamour of the autumn sun
Across the woodlands of Tervoe.

That morn my soul, refreshed and light,
Devised in summer-mooded way,
In what thick nook of forest gloom
My gift should take both root and bloom
Below the clouds of Canada.
Seeking, I found a pleasant spot,
From pulses of the sea-breeze wet,
And there in shadows, cedar-wrought,
My precious plant I fondly set.

Dear is that little haunt to me,
Where sometimes Mary comes to pray,
And hears the passing of her beads
Timed by the crepitating reeds,
Under the stars of Canada.
There sleep my loved ones and my lost—
The shapes that vanished long ago—
Above them cedar boughs are crost,
And round their graves the shamrocks blow.

For, look you, ere the first year died,
And on the pine's bark fell the grey,
Which comes like winter to our trees,
Ere yet the sap begins to freeze,
Deep in the woods of Canada ;
The shamrock's tendrils woke to flower,
Rich as the cowslip's inmost page,
And made a little golden bower
Around my daily hermitage.

Ireland is many a sail afar,
Beyond the rising of the day,
And many a long and weary year
Has perished since I first stood here,
Amid the wastes of Canada.

Yet when I see these little flowers
From emerald into orange run,
My thoughts go racing with the hours,
Behind the sea, behind the sun.

Away to where my own land lies,
Below the morning's rising ray—
Away to mountain peaks that hold
The flying clouds in tangled fold—
Away, away from Canada.
I see the Irish mouths and eyes,
I leap through fields of long ago,
And in my heart wells glad surprise,
And at my feet the shamrocks blow.

Let me rest with them when the mist
Of solid darkness fills my way,
Still feel their roots about my heart,
Of me and mine close-knitted part,
Under the grass of Canada.
And though around my headstone beat
The whitening breezes of the foam,
One thought will make the last hour sweet—
I shall not die *so far* from home.





CHRISTMAS DREAMS IN CANADA.



IN Ireland o'er the sea to-night
The mellow bells ring through the land ;
The cottage windows are alight,
And on the hearthstone flames the brand.
Full in the blaze—a kindly band—
Sit the sweet friends we knew of old,
Ere yet, below this alien sky,
We learned that winter storm and cold
Are far less keen than tyranny.
God bless their hearts, across the main,
Brave people, pure and generous !
Who knows but at this midnight hour
Their knees are bent in prayer for us !

A kindly knock salutes the door,
A genial welcome answers clear,
And neighbours gather on the floor—
Hooded in seasonable gear—
With greeting cries, "God bless all here."
Gay songs are sung, bright gossip passed,
And laughters ring against the roof ;

Along the hillside shrieks the blast,
But Munster thatch is tempest proof.
So speed the pleasant hours along,
Till through the lifted drifts of rain
And over barricades of cloud
The moon grows white upon the pane.

Ah ! dead, departed, Christmas Eves !
Though rest and plenty be our lot,
The Irish heart, unaltered, grieves
For that which was, and now is not ;
The happy farms—the ivied cot—
The brook that ran outside the hedge—
The two-arched bridge, a mile away—
The snow upon the window ledge—
The robin's chirp at break of day.
Canadian fields are green and fair,
But not so fair as those at home—
The teeming meadows which make bright
The pillared island in the foam.

Round us the pines keep murmuring,
Breathing like giants deep in dreams ;
We hear their branches crash and swing,
Or see them, in the lightning's gleams,
Ablaze like huge cathedral beams.
The headlong rivers chafe and roar
Across their wedged and broken bars ;
Far off the mountain tops loom hoar
And stormy up amongst the stars ;
But in the Holy Isle, this eve,
The wind makes music in the wood,
And only plashing gusts reveal
The troubled swiftness of the flood.

To-morrow morn the country ways,
The furrowed by-paths in the grass,
Will see, in snooded, kerchiefed maze,
The pious people throng to Mass
From level plain and upland pass.
With palms the altars there will shine ;
And white flow'rs, plucked by maiden hands,
Will make more fair the blessed shrine
Where Jesus' stainless Mother stands.
Ah ! may we be remembered there !
They'll not forget us—our own blood !—
When heads and knees are bowed to Him
Who died upon the bitter wood.

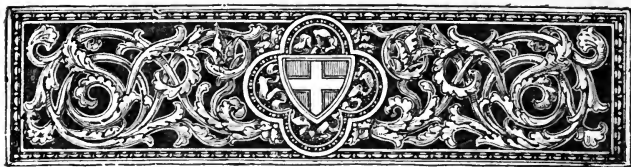
Oh ! had I but the wings the dove
Bears winnowing through crystal air,
In one fleet ecstasy of love
I'd fly, and dream out Christmas there—
Where grey Kilmallock's ruins bare
Shelter my father's, mother's graves,
And linnets in the ivy sing—
Where the long grass declines in waves,
And daisies rarely come with spring :
One hour to kiss the sacred turf,
And pray my own to pray for me—
My people who went down in grief
To shine as saints eternally.

Still Patrick guards his ransomed isle,
And God, if patient, still is just ;
He will not let oppressors vile
For ever strew her fields with dust,
And sate with blood their fiery thirst.
A day will come when in the skies
The morning wind shall gather breath,

And saints shall bid our Ireland rise
From out the trance of seeming death.
For her, her myriad martyrs plead,
Her banded confessors appeal ;
And shall their cries for aye succumb
To ruffian fraud and vengeful steel ?

Forbid it, Lord ! Yet hasten still
Redemption's morn—as Thine now breaks—
The living splendour feared of hell,
Which through its yelling caverns shakes.
Oh ! speed it, for Thy saints' dear sakes !
And we, though sad and far away,
Will gladly kiss our freezing shrouds,
To see, from this dark Canada,
That glory kindling in the clouds.
Oh ! bid the promised star appear,
And let the voices from above
Bless with the tidings born of peace
The holy island of our love.





AN IRISH DEATHBED IN CANADA.



THINK as I lie here, Mary,
The length of the livelong day,
Of the sunny woods of Kilsinan,
The cliffs, the ships, and the bay.

They seem to glimmer before me
Like images in a stream ;
Not quite as clear as the eyesight,
But more distinct than a dream.

There's a cottage hooded in ivy,
A hundred steps from the mill ;
The cross on the whitewashed chapel,
The churchyard up on the hill.

I see the funerals going,
And hear the sorrowful keen
Of the friends and the white-scarfed neighbours
Who bear the coffin between.

The tears are thick on my eyelids,
For there, when the world was joy,
One day, in the grass and daisies,
I buried my little boy.

Yet why should I weep to have lost him,
Though he was so sweet to see?
For I know he's far up in heaven,
And praying to God for me!

I weep, for I feel so lonely,
And my home is far away,
And the sky that is over the roof-top,
Is the cold sky of Canada.

The fields here never have shamrocks;
'Tis only at home they grow;
I've gathered them far in winter,
In the melted spots of the snow.

And 'tis good to have them about you
When you're lying low in your grave,
For they stand for the Three Blest Persons,
And they have the power to save.

'Tis long since they wrote from Ireland,
But we may have a letter yet,
For, with all that the people say of them,
The Irish never forget.

And I know they won't *overlook* me,
God help them! Who knows how they
Have struggled to save the postage
This many a weary day!

You won't forget, Mary, darling,
When Death here has *took* his stand,
To give me the blessed candle
And the bit o' palm in my hand ;

Nor to say the prayers for the dying ;
And then, when I am no more,
To bury me near the chapel,
With my feet to the Irish shore ?

I'm sure that I've prayed for patience,
Whenever my hour was come,
But 'tis very hard, Mary, darling,
To die here so far from home.





BACK TO THE GREEN SHORE.



YELLOW and slow, the sunset dips
Along the crimson rim of sea ;
The gold light falls across the ships,
And burns upon the waveless lee.
One tender star shines out above,
The slender moon stands in the east :
Each shines upon the land we love,
And this is good St Brandon's feast.
Let the winds blow our sails of snow,
And hurry us swiftly through the foam,
Through night and day, away, away,
To the consecrated shores of home.

Many a year our ploughshares broke
The stubborn tilth of Canada ;
We scored the soil, and cheered the yoke,
With songs of Ireland far away.
We never saw the round sun rise
Above the cedars fringed and hoar,

But tears would rush into our eyes—
We knew he left the Irish shore.
Let the winds blow our sails of snow,
And hurry us swiftly through the foam;
Through night and day, away, away,
To the long remembered coasts of home.

Graves there be in the land we left;
Brother and sister calmly sleep,
The cross above for a parting gift,
In clustered shamrocks planted deep;
And every coffin holds a sod
Dug from the turf of Innisfail,
Ere, scorned by men, but saved by God,
We trusted first to the westward gale.
Let the winds blow our sails of snow,
And hurry us swiftly through the foam,
Through night and day, away, away,
To the unforgotten fields of home.

The magic mountains tower there still,
The fairies dance in raths and dells;
At morn, the pious people kneel
In prayer around the holy wells.
The children play at eve among
The yellow harvest of the year,
Till from the belfry, like a song,
The Angelus rings sweet and clear.
Let the winds blow our sails of snow,
And hurry as swiftly through the foam,
Through night and day, away, away,
To the dear—the memoried—shores of home.

'Tis dawn—the night relaxes—lo!
Out of the waves one island grows;

With mists the land is white below,
 But overhead is heaven's own rose.
 Mother of God ! 'tis Ireland—look !
 I'd know *that* grass in a thousand years,
 Watered never by cloud or brook,
 But by the priests' and people's tears.
 Move soft and slow you sails of snow,
 That hurried us swiftly through the foam—
 Through night and day, away, away,
 To the blessed hills of our Irish home.





THE TREATY STONE.



HERE Shannon's waters fresh and free,
With mountain leaflets strown,
Sweeps past the Bridge of History
Stands Limerick's Treaty Stone.
Its crest is dinted by the storm,
Its base is green with rime,
Yet worn and frail
It tells the tale
Of Ireland's fighting time ;
Of Ireland's faithful fighting time
When, under Sarsfield's guns,
The tattered banner flew above
Her proudly marshalled sons.

Ah, beacon of that bloody past
While yet the star of hope
Shone through the hurrying cloud and blast
In Freedom's horoscope !
Dumb witness—if thou could'st be dumb—
Rememberest the day
When ruffian fraud
Appealed to God—
Appealing to betray ?

A perjurer's hand was laid on thee,
A soldier's grasped the same—
Stand firm thou patient history
Of English guilt and shame.

What boots it if our sires, betrayed
And robbed of life and home,
Broke sunken heart and smiting blade
In lands beyond the foam?
The blood they shed was Irish blood,
But not for us it flowed;
We heard their fame,
We prized their name,
But writhed beneath the goad.
All France's glory helped us not
Whilst they, the wild and free,
Bore through half Europe's hail of shot
The Bourbon blazonry.

And why did Ireland fall so low,
And why despoil her might
To shield by prayer, and curse, and blow
The outcast Jacobite?
Oh! Ireland rallied round her king!—
Her English king forsooth!—
She gave him dower,
The glorious flower
Of her unconquered youth.
Grey prophet where the Shannon hastes!
One oath through Ireland rings—
She'll pause before again she wastes
Her blood for English kings.

For who recalls, his heart not pained,
That gallant sacrifice—
A coward Stuart's cause maintained
At no uncertain price?
On Aughrim's field—on Boyne's declines—
We sowed our dead like grain;
And yonder, where
The street runs fair,
The trench was choked with slain.
For what, for whom, was such red cost?
What gain could it confer?
This—Ireland's cause two centuries lost—
Herself a sepulchre.

O solemn wizard by the tide,
O Thomond's Memnon, hear!
If broken be the Nation's pride,
We've yet to learn to fear.
The flag that dropped from Sarsfield's hands
Has touched the stars again,
Though round it lay
In torn array
No hosts of slaughtered men.
Enough if hearts were there to lift
Its tatters from the mould,
In trust that heaven mayhap would drift
A sunbeam on its fold.

God guard thee well, thou peerless stone,
Worn by adoring lips!
Thy dust is strewn from shore to shore
Wherever sail the ships.

Old testament of hate and love,
Rest mute a little while !
From skies of night
The living light
Is bursting on our isle.
'Twill come—must come—the shadows race,
And ere the dawn is done,
Thy lot shall be the proudest place
In Ireland's Pantheon.





I R E L A N D.



NOT lost in the uproar and turmoil of Nations,
Not merged in the darkness that billows thy
skies,
Not broken, O Mother, though bowed with
oppression,
The soul of the Future looks out from thine eyes.
The good sword is rusted, the banner is shattered,
And low in the dust lies the chivalrous lance,
But thy brow still uplifts to the blaze of the morning,
Thy deathless ambition is still to advance.

The suns wheel around thee in mystical orbits
From highland to highland, from river to sea,
They shine on a race that is tamed, but unconquered,
On a race, thrice-determined and sworn to be free.
'Mid ruins that chronicle glories transcendent—
The vague twilight splendours of green Innisfail—
Rise up from the dawn to the limits of sunset
The prayer and the hope of the long-smitten Gael.

The ages have withered apast the horizons—

They've withered like rain on a desolate land,
The thick-thronging centuries waver and vanish,

The past is no more ; but its monuments stand.
In temple prophetic, in eloquent ruin,
In pillar tower, pinnacled vapours and stars,
Survive the memorials, the stern attestations
Of our genius, our greatness, our glories, our wars.

Have we lived for the Past? Do we live for no Future?

Must the brain and the sinew, transforming the earth,
Be denied in the land that still claims and still needs
them,

The guerdon bestowed at the foreigner's hearth?
Rough soldiers are we, and our might has supported
The fortunes of many a tottering throne—
Is it manhood or greatness to strike for the stranger
And once in a century strike for our own?

Not rush on the bayonets with fervour impatient,

Not strike to be stricken, for that were a crime ;

Not heedlessly plunge in the arms of disaster,

Nor vainly prejudge the long issues of Time.

Though sorrow be poignant, though wrongs spur our
spirits,

Though the hope of swift vengeance is fatally sweet,

'Twere better to rest (not despondent) for ages

Than be rolled further back by the tides of defeat.

We were beaten ; we suffer the sins of disaster ;

But penance and wisdom are ever allied :

The greatness of conscience, the prowess of reason,

Are marshalled, like hosts of the field, on our side.

By thinking, by toiling, the arms of redemption
In the fires of affliction are fashioned and wrought,
And next when our banner floats over the battle,
So help us good heaven, 'twill float where it ought !

What, idle till then ? Let the pitiless slander
Be found on the lips of the coward and knave ;
Not idle, not tearful, but trustfully working
To raise, to inspirit, to counsel, to save.
To gather together the wrecks of our people,
Now scattered o'er earth, like the desert-blown sand,
To fill up the measure of manhood's ambition—
Labour and leisure, a home and a land.

'Tis worth all our seeking, worth all our endeavour,
To wait in the darkness, with backs to Despair,
Believing the nation, long clouded and sunless,
In the purpose of heaven is Liberty's heir ;
Believing that he who sows thickly and fondly,
The fruit of the harvest in gladness shall reap—
Believing, when Ireland shall rise from her ashes,
To guard her and crown her our blood were too cheap.

Were we born of the savage and trained in the forest,
Our lives and our fates but an echoing curse ;
Did we worship the god of the tree-top and tempest,
Could our fortunes be sadder—our heritage worse ?
“ Be tranquil and rest,” is the answer of Dives,
But contempt whitely foams upon Lazarus' lips—
“ Content, when our brethren, dispersed, find a shelter
In sepulchres, prisons, in workhouses, ships ! ”

They should live, they should breathe—let the plunder-
ing tyrants
The spoils of the merciless Conquest restore ;

Or keep them, and then let the flag of the Pirate
Flash its last gleam of flame on our desolate shore.
Let us be as we are, and the Island uprising
Shall spring to the height of her slumbering powers,
Her sighs become music, her tears bright traditions,
Her fetters one vesture and garland of flowers.

Ah ! shame on repining ; thrice shamed the despondent ;
If God in His mercy but baffle our fears,
Shall not hope have the right to fruition resplendent,
And fulfilment remain through the centuried years ?
By the altars we cherish, the shrines consecrated
With the martyr's, the poet's, the warrior's dust,
Let us swear to forget the dark pageant of ages,
Or, remembering it still, to look forward and trust.

For the skies are upheaving, and flickers of daylight
Are visible deep in their panoplied gloom,
And the winds burst their paths from their caverns of
silence

Like trumpet blasts sounding the warning of doom.
Rest, beautiful Mother ; rest Heiress of Ages ;
There's a beat in thy pulse, and a throb on thy bier ;
Rest calmly and sweet, for the Day is approaching—
O Lady of Sorrows, Redemption is near.





MY FIDDLE.



ROOM of silent glee or instant laugh,
Where one pure woman at the hearth presides,
O better than the Aldabraca staff
Which Heine scorns and Goethe's wit derides,
Thou, too, hast many sides :

Knick-knacks and pictures—quaint imaginings
Of friends at home or friendships cast abroad ;
Souls severed by the slow, reluctant wings,
Which, somehow, turn and find their way to God.

There in the firelight hangs my fiddle dear,
Nut-brown and blazoned with innumerable stain.
This blotch ! it cost me an absolving tear—
You kissed it, dear—the kiss is in the grain.
Kiss it, and kiss it, darling, thrice again.
When a poor lad I roamed with this beside
Through hungry pathways of the hungry earth,
I dreamt of you by shore and isle and tide,
And through my sadness rang the fiddle's mirth.

O little instrument,
Blent cedar, tendon, bent
In such strange counterpoise of sigh and sound,
Have you been ever to my Ireland true?
Has ever from this red, unribboned throat
Sounded a slavish note?
Or helped to close the lethargy which lies
On Ireland's holy eyes?
No, in our Nation's most spiteful pang,
And when the warning rang
Through all the empire, with unbated breath,
"With Ireland, Peace, or Death,"
You, gallant fiddle, sent the loudest cry
Back to that scream of startled infamy,
You did your work, serenely, calm, and sure;
Rest there, and be secure.

Perhaps at no far day,
Some lad of mine shall say,
Handling my pet with sweetest reverence:
"There was a time, and day,
The Old Man used to play,
From all profundities of heart immense.
Even in our hourly walk,
He, dreaming, loved to talk
To us of that compassionated Isle
Bathed in dark azure of melodious seas,
And all his soul was in the west awhile,
And I was on his knees."

It may, or may not be—
Lo! there's the heaving sea,
The wave that breaks into exceeding spray,—
The sullen wave which quits and fills the bay,
Making green riot of a holiday,

Flows on to Ireland. O my fiddle dear,
 Could you and I, this hour,
 Strengthened with magic pow'r,
 Leap the long headlands and tumultuous main,
 In the spent shadow of that aching foam,
 How good for you and me
 To feel at last the blessedness of Home.

O darling, must it come !—
 Must thou hang weird and dumb—
 Palsied to silence, while the head which drew
 No coward's inspiration from thy strings,
 No longer blesses the auroral dew,
 Nor the lark's flight, nor thrush's poising wings !
 Reft of its natural green,
 Thy master's soul is seen,
 Boiled white in double compounds of routine :
 And that means peace. For blessed are the chimes
 Which tell of labour done, and toil rewarded—
 Forgetfulness of tantalising rhymes,
 And sensitiveness, feeble, though two-sworded.

O friend, come down to-day,
 We shall have full heart's play—
 It is St Patrick's morning. Round thy head
 This Tipperary shamrock wreath I spread ;
 Knitting it with a curl from the soft hair
 Of her—my darling—who below those skies
 Preserves my mother's hair—my mother's eyes,
 And that most perfect grace
 Which seemed to make a sweet, unmeasured space
 Between her and all women. Lo ! the night
 Is mottled with sunrising. Darkness faints
 Along the ever-growing rim of light—
 God bless St Patrick and the Isle of Saints !



NOT DEAD.

NOT death, not sleep, not yet the hectic beauty
Of one whose hours are closing with the day ;
Not the cold pallor, the reluctant eyelids,
The hair, once golden, dashed with ashen grey,
Are thine dear Island ; but the calm suspension,
From the deep, vital fount of suffering drawn,
Of passion, progress, effort, and achievement,
Through the night agony that moves towards dawn.

Sad Mother sitting in the mists of ages
By oceans spuming to the sun and moon—
Sad Mother, tranced in ungradating twilight
That keeps no promise of an eve or noon,
The sea wind freshens thy eternal garland,
The salt ooze perfumes thy delicious hair,
And on the cheek where death had set its signet
The rose of immortality blows fair.

Thou art in exile, yet art present with us,
As in the moonlight on a far-off sea
The pilgrim skiff puts out to catch the lustre,
But on, and on, it moves incessantly.

It pales, it perishes ; the silver surges
Melt slowly into blackness one by one ;
The pilot turns his helm, dejected, baffled,
And, in his front upsprings the blood-red sun.

And so with thee, Invisible Existence,
Dreamiest of Phantoms, yet most true,
O Shape divinest that eludes our searches—
Pure fire, and spirit, as ascending dew.
We hear thy voice, in solitary pauses,
We see thy face but dark, as in a glass ;
The odour of thy presence fills the mountains,
The traces of thy vestment sweep the grass.

How have they painted thee ? A haggard beauty,
One pearly elbow o'er a rent harp cast,
Eyes, tear diffused, with multitudes of sorrows,
And hair blown backward by the shrieking blast.
The hills encircle thee, the sea's before thee ;
And on the yeasty billows' shaking rim,
Sole hope of thine, and of thy generations,
One melancholy star shines low and dim.

I have beheld thee, O transcendent vision :
A greater glory rounded thy estate,
Thine were not then the weeds of woman's sorrow,
Nor the quenched lamp outside the thrice-barred gate :
The summer kindled in thy radiant tresses,
The passion-flowers were heaped upon thy lap,
Thy left hand held the shield—thy right the sabre,
And on thy temples sat the Phrygian Cap.

A lovely majesty, a form imperial !
Grace in thy silence, music in thy step !
The ever vernal youth beneath thine eyelids,
Fresh blood and beauty on the high-curved lip.

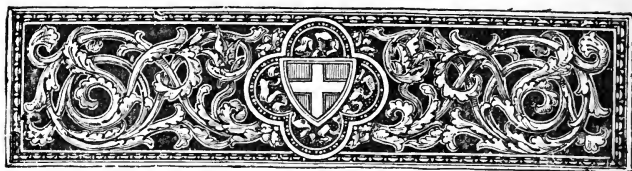
The clear, chill air grew golden to thy movement,
The columned aisles of oaks bowed to thine head,
And, maiden as thou art, the flinten mountains
Shook, as a god had moved them, to thy tread.

Ah, the wild background ! for there loomed behind thee
The spectral shadow of the land that was—
Heaped ruin, chaos piled on tumbled chaos,
The giant fragments of a beaten cause ;
But not *thy* cause—the cause of thine oppressor—
His temples' depths lay baking in the sun,
The owls were harvesting within his prisons ;
For thou had'st conquered, and his race was run.

The painful vigil, the sublime persistence—
Prayers, tears, and sufferings had wrought their end—
Thou stood'st a victor crowned among the Nations,
Angel of Peace, but armed to defend.
The banner of our Race flew on the oceans,
No more the trampled ensign of the Past ;
Dense legions poured along the swollen highways,
Or where the cities rose erect and vast.

And from the People's hearts one thunderous pæan
Gathered and rolled along the skirts of night :
" Praise to our God whose arm hath slain oppression,
And given the battle to dishonoured Right."
O waiting Ireland, 'twas thy shining future !
What reck's it that thy past was foul and red,
When on the calm and fulness of fruition,
Heaven shall proclaim to earth :—Thou art not dead ?





RESURRECTION.

SLOW stream the long processions of the ages,
And slowly ripen circumstance and fate,
But the great world still works its revolutions,
Making the future in the present wait.

Banners struck down in long-forgotten battles,
Principles that perished in old strife,
Truths that have, ship-like, sunk on the horizon,
Touched by the common law, arise to life.

In the broad plan of providential being,
God has decided no thing shall be lost,
From the thin mist that dances on the mountain,
To the white breaker reeling on the coast.

They vanish, they dislimn, we lose their outlines,
For as they seem to shine and move no more,
Yet doth the vapour clothe another hilltop,
The billows welter on another shore.

Thus it is willed : existences that perish,
As stars are blotted in the harvest storm,
Live in their essences, and then returning,
Put on fresh semblances of light and form.

Land of our hearts, receive the revelation
In the mid-winter of thy tearful grief,
Land of our souls, behold thy lot prefigured
In the quick bursting of the Paschal leaf.

Only a moon ago, the earth lay sleeping,
Stiff were the icicles on brooks and fords ;
To-day she wakes in joyful resurrection
Amid the crystal welcomings of birds.

The trees have blossom, and the highland twilights
Are pierced with summer splendours, though the wing
Of the wild swallow is still palpitating,
With hues that are the benisons of spring.

For thee, our sainted queen, and Island-mother,
Be there no heralds of advancing change,
No breath upon the waters, and in heaven
No fiery portent mystically strange ?

Low art thou lying in the solemn midnight ;
O'er the rank verdure of thy nameless grave
The lichens thicken into words fantastic,
The immemorial willows sigh and wave.

Sole sepulchre amid the throbbing Nations,
Fading tradition of a day sublime,
Whose far-off glories glimmer indistinctly,
From the remotest boundaries of time.

Thine were the purple and the gold of Sidon,
Thy ships went flashing along desert seas ;
Came the barbarians from o'ershadowed Europe,
And, thirsting after knowledge, clasped thy knees.

Great were thy kings, and manifold thy masters,
The royal dower was the scholar's lore ;
The temple leaped to heaven with crown of lightning,
The precious galley laboured by the shore.

Prophet and monarch, master and disciple,
Pillar and pillared shrine alike are fled,
And thou, once radiant as the radiant morning,
Hast lot and heritage beside the dead.

And is it death ? Has death and its corruption
Destroyed the majesty of thy pure face—
Hast thou lain down in sorrowful abasement
Glad that the earth afforded hiding-place ?

Whisper it not ! Never hath God defeated
The hope that blossoms into sacred trust ;
In that low cell wherein thy head reposes
Let no man seek for perishable dust.

Thou wert a spirit, visible, immortal,
Clothed in human panoply and might—
A spirit fugitive, beheld by sages
Between the growing day and fading night.

With living memories thy shrines are haunted,
There come thy worshippers with prayers and vows,
Not as to a bier, but to a bridal,
With roses wreathed round rejoicing brows.

And as thy children, goaded by oppression,
Toil painfully by alien woods and streams,
Ever they turn with the heart's deep allegiance
To thee, the clouded Eden of their dreams.

What of thy cause by martyrs consecrated—
Has that, too, vanished like thy primal fame,
A fierce, weird legend sliding down the ages—
A thing of mingled glory and of shame?

What of thy cause? Ah! though the world reject thee,
Holy it is to thine, to us, to ours—
The passionate yearning for the fires of freedom
Blazing upon hilltops, towns, and towers.

Exile has not quenched the aspiration,
Though he who loves it dares the scoffer's scorn,
And wears enwreathed in his crown heroic
The bloody, bitter, and abiding thorn.

Terror has not dimmed its fixed brightness,
Though it and hourly suffering interlace;
Wherever scattered through the tribes and nations
It follows like the shadow of our race.

And in the solemn time of good appointment,
Either in tumult, anarchy, or peace,
The heavens shall bloom with harbingers of spring time,
The blinding darkness of the night shall cease.

It is reserved perhaps for later seasons
Than we in our impatience comprehend;
But, late or soon, the victory is promised
If we but struggle bravely to the end—

Struggle, with learning, brain, and quick endeavour,
By manly counsel, and inspiring word;
Or, challenged by the bugle-blast of battle,
Lay not the craven's hand upon the sword.

But full of faith and generous reliance,
Remembering that freedom has its price ;
Fight, if we must, through rolling ranks and carnage,
Either to Liberty or to Paradise.

Land of our hearts, receive the revelation,
In the mid-winter of thy tearful grief ;
Land of our souls, behold thy lot prefigured
In the quick bursting of the Paschal leaf.





**RETURN
TO →**

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
202 Main Library

LOAN PERIOD 1 HOME USE	2	3
4	5	6

1-month loans may be renewed by calling 642-3405

6-month loans may be recharged by bringing books to Circulation Desk
Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

[illegible]

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

FORM NO. DD6, 60m, 11/78

BERKELEY, CA 94720

YB 13558

